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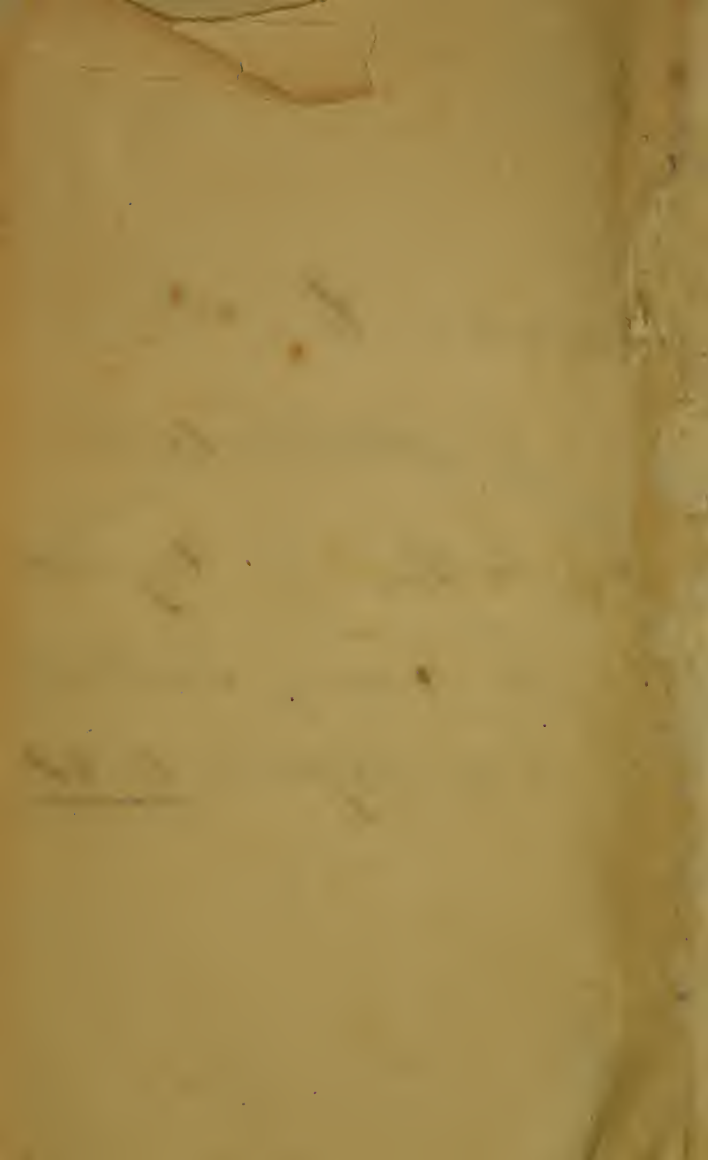
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Class April 1891



EXPOSITION

OF

*James McCook*

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS:

WITH

*Brechtius*

*1844*

REMARKS

ON THE

COMMENTARIES OF DR. MACKNIGHT, PROFESSOR  
THOLUCK, AND PROFESSOR MOSES STUART.

BY

ROBERT HALDANE, Esq.

VOL. I.

CHAPTERS I.—V.

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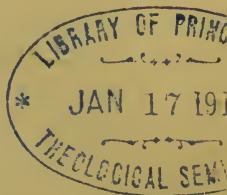
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Introduction

I

## INTRODUCTION.

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ALL SCRIPTURE is given by inspiration of God. Every page of the sacred volume is stamped with the impress of Deity, and contains an inexhaustible treasure of wisdom, and knowledge, and consolation. Some portions of the word of God, like some parts of the material creation, may be more important than others. But all have their proper place, all proclaim something of the character of the glorious Author, and all ought to be earnestly and reverentially studied. Whatever be their subject, whether it relates to the history of individuals or of nations, whether it contains the words of precept or exhortation, or whether it teaches by example, all is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness. But while every part of the word of God demands the most serious attention, it is not to be doubt-

ed that certain portions of the sacred volume call for more frequent and deeper meditation. Among these, the Epistle to the Romans is entitled to peculiar regard. It is the only part of Scripture which contains a detailed and systematic exhibition of the doctrines of Christianity. The great truths which are embodied and inculcated in every other part of the Bible, are here brought together in a condensed and comprehensive form. More especially the glorious doctrine of justification by faith is clearly unfolded, and exhibited in the strongest light. This doctrine so far transcends the powers of man's discovery, that human wisdom is ever attempting either to set it aside, or to mould it into accordance with systems which represent salvation as more or less the reward of merit.

The Epistle to the Romans has always attracted the peculiar notice of those whose study has been directed to the interpretation of Scripture. To this portion of the divine record, all who look for salvation by grace have constantly appealed, and here they have a rich mine of evidence alike solid and inexhaustible. No considerable difference of interpretation has ever been given of its contents by those who have renounced their own wisdom, and determined to



follow implicitly the obvious meaning of the word of God.

This epistle has been equally an object of attention to those who admit the authority of Scripture, but follow their own wisdom in forming their system of religious doctrine. Salvation by grace, and salvation by works, are so inconsistent with each other, that it might well be supposed no attempt would ever be made to bring them into harmony. Still the attempt has been made. Human wisdom cannot receive the doctrine of the Epistle to the Romans, and men professing Christianity, cannot deny it to be a part of Scripture. What, then, is to be done? A compromise and peace are proclaimed between the wisdom of man and the revelation of God. All the ingenuity of Mr Locke, one of the most acute metaphysicians that ever appeared, has been exerted to bring Paul into accordance with human science. He and many others have laboured to give a view of this epistle, that may reconcile human merit with divine grace.

The mind of every man is, by nature, disaffected to the doctrine of this epistle; but it is only in proportion to the audacity of his unbelief that any one will directly avow his oppo-

sition. While some, by the wildest suppositions, will boldly set aside every thing it contains that opposes their own preconceived opinions, others will receive its statements, only with the reserve of certain necessary modifications. Thus, in the deviations from truth in the exposition of its doctrines, we find various shades of the same unhallowed disregard for the divine testimony.

The spirit of speculation and of novelty which is now abroad, loudly calls upon Christians to give earnest heed to the truths inculcated in the Epistle to the Romans. There is hardly any doctrine which has not been of late years exposed to the corruptions and perversions of men. Many, altogether destitute of the Spirit of God and the semblance of true religion, have nevertheless chosen the word of God, and its solemn and awfully momentous truths, as the arena upon which to exercise their learning and display their ingenuity. In consequence of the Scriptures being written in the dead languages, there is doubtless scope for the diligent employment of critical research. But if it were enquired how much additional light has been thrown upon the sacred volume by the refinements of modern critics, it would be found to bear a very small

proportion to the evil influence of unsanctified learning applied to the holy doctrines of Revelation. It has become common, even among Christians, to speak of the critical interpretation of Scripture as requiring little or nothing more than mere scholarship, and many seem to suppose that the office of a critical and that of a doctrinal interpreter are so widely different that a man may be a safe and useful critic who has at the same time no relish for the grand truths of the Bible. There cannot be a more lamentable delusion, or one more calculated to desecrate the character and obscure the majesty of the Word of God. To suppose that a man may rightly interpret the Scriptures, while he is ignorant of the truths of the Gospel, or disaffected to some of its grand fundamental doctrines,—to imagine that this can be to him a useful or even an innocent occupation, is to regard these Scriptures, as the production of ordinary men, treating of subjects of ordinary importance, instead of containing, as they do, the message of the Most High God, revealing life or death to every soul of man to whom they come.

If the Scriptures have not testified in vain that the carnal mind is enmity against God ; if

we are bound to believe that there is no middle state between the Christian and the unbeliever; can we wonder at the manner in which they have been perverted, not only by the ignorance, but by the inveterate prejudices of men from whom the Gospel is hid? Is it reasonable—is it agreeable to the dictates of common sense, to believe that the critical interpretations of such men are not tinged with their own darkened and hostile views of the divine character and the divine revelation? And yet such is the opinion entertained of the labours of some of the most unenlightened commentators, that their works have obtained a celebrity altogether unaccountable on any principle of sound Christian wisdom.

Christians ought to be particularly on their guard against tampering in any degree with the word of God. We should never forget, that when we are explaining any expression of Scripture, we are treating of what are the very words of the Holy Ghost as much as if they had been spoken to us by a voice from heaven. The profane rashness of many critics is much emboldened, by the circumstance that men have been employed as the instruments of the Almighty in communicating his revelation. A sort of modified inspiration only is granted to the

Scriptures, and they are often practically treated as the words merely of those who were employed as the penmen. When God is thus kept out of sight, little ceremony is used in treating the words of the Apostles with the utmost freedom. That profound reverence and awe with which the Scriptures ought to be read and handled, is, in many instances, too little exemplified. The poor man's Bible is the Word of God, in which he has no suspicion that there is anything but perfection. The Bible of the profoundly erudite scholar, is often a book that is not so necessary to instruct him, as one that needs his hand for alteration, or amendment, or confirmation. Learning may be usefully employed; but if learning ever forgets that it must sit at the feet of Jesus, it will be a curse instead of a blessing. It will raise clouds and darkness, instead of communicating light to the world.

The evil of studying the Scriptures, and commenting upon them with as little reverence as a scholar might comment upon the plays of Aristophanes or Terence, has extended itself much farther than might be supposed. This is the spirit in which the German Neologians have written; and, indeed, it is to be feared, that as

the Neologian form of infidelity originated from this profane method of criticising the Scriptures, so the same cause may produce the same effect in this country. Certain it is, that works have been republished or translated here, which are very little calculated to uphold the ancient faith of the church of Christ, or to advance the knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus.

From present appearances, there is every reason to fear that Britain will be inundated with German Neology. The tide has strongly set in, and unless the Christian public be upon their guard, the whole country will be brought under its influence. It is a solemn thing to be employed in ushering into more extended notoriety publications that have a tendency to lower the character of the Holy Scriptures, to introduce doubt and confusion into the minds of those who are weak in the faith, and to embolden others who seek an apology for casting away the fetters of education and authority, and desire to launch out into the ocean of wild and dangerous speculation. While some appearances in Germany of a return to the Scripture doctrine of salvation by Jesus Christ should be gladly hailed by every Christian, yet it must be admitted, that those who in that country seem to

have made the greatest advances in the knowledge of the Gospel, are still far from being entitled to be pointed out as guides to the Christians of this country. Their modifications of divine truth are manifestly under the influences of a criticism too nearly allied to Neology. There is great danger, that in the admiration of German criticism, a tincture may be received from continental errors. It would be far preferable, if the learned Christians of Britain would pursue truth in a diligent examination of its own sources, rather than spend their time in retailing the criticisms of German scholars. "Their criticisms," it is observed by Mr. Carson, "are arbitrary, forced, and in the highest degree fantastical. Their learning is boundless, yet their criticism is mere trash. The vast extent of their literary acquirements has overawed British theologians, and given an importance to arguments that are self-evidently false."

In these days of boasted liberality, it may appear captious to oppose with zeal the errors of men who have acquired a name in the Christian world. The mantle of charity, it will be said, ought to be thrown over the mistakes that have resulted from a free and impartial investi-

gation of the truth, and they ought either to be overlooked, or noticed with a slight expression of disapprobation. Such, however, was not the conduct of the Apostle Paul. He spared neither churches nor individuals, when the doctrines they promulgated tended to the subversion of the Gospel; and the zeal with which he resisted their errors was not inferior to that with which he encountered the open enemies of Christianity. He affirms that the doctrine introduced into the Galatian churches is another gospel, and denounces a curse against all by whom it was promulgated. Instead of complimenting the authors of this corruption of the Gospel, as only abusing in a slight degree the liberty of free examination, he decides that they should be cut off as troublers of the churches. Let not Christians be more courteous in expressing their views of the guilt and danger of corrupting the Gospel, than faithful and compassionate to the people of Christ who may be injured by false doctrine. It is highly sinful to bandy compliments at the expense of truth.

The awful responsibility of being accessory to the propagation of error, is strongly expressed by the Apostle John. "If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him



not into your house, neither bid him God speed : for he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds." If the imputation of Adam's sin and of Christ's righteousness, be doctrines contained in the Word of God, commentaries that labour to expel them from that Word must be grossly pestiferous books, which no Christian ought to recommend, but which, on the contrary, to the utmost of his power, it is his duty to oppose.

A very dangerous misrepresentation of some of the great doctrines of the Epistle to the Romans, has lately come before the public, in a commentary on that epistle from the pen of Professor Moses Stuart of America. As that work has obtained an extensive circulation in this country, as it has been strongly recommended, and is likely to produce a considerable effect, it has appeared to me proper to make frequent references, in the Exposition of the five first chapters, to his glaring perversions of their important contents. On the same principle I have introduced various remarks on the well-known heterodox commentary of Dr Macknight, and have also alluded occasionally to that of Professor Tholuck, lately published.

In the following Exposition I have availed

myself of all the assistance I could obtain, from whatever quarter. Especially, I have made use of every thing that appeared to be most valuable in the commentary of Claude, which terminates at the beginning of the twenty-first verse of the third chapter. I have also had the advantage of the assistance of Mr Carson, whose thorough acquaintance with the original language, and well-known critical discernment, peculiarly qualify him for rendering effectual aid in such a work. As it is my object to make this Exposition as useful as possible to all descriptions of readers, I have not always confined myself simply to an explanation of the text, but have occasionally extended, at some length, remarks on such subjects as seemed to demand particular attention, either on account of their own importance, or of mistaken opinions entertained concerning them. As to those which required a fuller discussion than could be conveniently introduced, I have referred to my larger work on the Evidence and Authority of Divine Revelation.

In the first five chapters of this Epistle, the great doctrine of justification by faith, of which they exclusively treat, is more fully discussed than in any other part of Scripture. In the first

chapter, the Apostle commences by directing the attention of those to whom he wrote to the person of the Son of God in his incarnation in time, and his divine nature from eternity, as the great subject of that Gospel which he was commissioned to proclaim. After a most striking introduction, every way calculated to arrest the attention, and conciliate the affection of those whom he addressed, Paul briefly announces, what he intends afterwards to establish, that the Gospel is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth, because in it is revealed the righteousness of God. Unless such a righteousness had been provided, all men must have suffered the punishment due to sin, seeing God hath denounced his high displeasure against their ungodliness and unrighteousness. These are the great truths which the Apostle immediately proceeds to unfold. And as they stand connected with every part of that salvation which God has prepared, he is led to exhibit a most animating and consolatory view of the whole of that great plan of mercy, which proclaims "glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will toward men."

The first point which the Apostle establishes, is the ruined condition of men, who by nature

are all under sin. The charge of ungodliness and of consequent unrighteousness, he proves first against the Gentiles. They had departed from the worship of God, although, in the works of the visible creation, they had sufficient notification of his power and Godhead. In their conduct they had violated the law written in their hearts, and had sinned in opposition to what they knew to be right, and to the testimony of their consciences in its favour. All of them, therefore, lay under the sentence of condemnation which will be pronounced on the workers of iniquity in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men. In the second chapter a similar charge of guilt and transgression is established against the Jews, notwithstanding the superior advantage of a written revelation with which they had been favoured.

Having proved in the two first chapters, by an appeal to undeniable facts, that the Gentiles and the Jews were both guilty before God; in the third, taking them both together, Paul exhibits a fearful picture, drawn from the testimony of the Old Testament Scriptures, of their universal guilt and depravity. And thus having established it as an undeniable truth that every man in his natural state lies under the just condem-

nation of God, as a rebel against him in all the three ways in which he has been pleased to reveal himself, he arrives at the inevitable conclusion, that by obedience to law no man living shall be justified; that so far from justifying, the law proves him to be a transgressor.

The way is thus prepared for the grand display of the grace and mercy of God announced in the gospel. What the law could not do, not from any deficiency in itself, but owing to the depravity of man, God has fully accomplished. Man has no righteousness of his own which he can plead, but God has provided a righteousness for him. This righteousness, infinitely superior to that which he originally possessed, is provided solely by grace, and received solely by faith. It is placed to the account of the believer for his justification, without the smallest respect either to his previous or subsequent obedience. Yet, so far from being contrary to the justice of God, this method of justification, "freely by his grace," illustrates his justice, and vindicates his former dealings to men. So far from making the law void, it establishes it in all its honour and authority. This way of salvation equally applies to all, both Jews and Gentiles—men of every nation and of

every character; "there is no difference" here, for all, without exception, are sinners.

The Apostle, in the fourth chapter, in obviating certain objections, farther confirms and illustrates his doctrine. And in order to complete the view of the great subject of his discussion, he describes, in the fifth chapter, the blessed effects connected with a state of justification. He then gives a striking account of the entrance of that sin and of that righteousness, both of which he had been exhibiting; and shows the reason of the introduction of the written law, by means of which the extent of the evil of the one, and of the effectual remedy brought by the other, was fully made manifest to the glory of the grace of God.

These five chapters disclose a consistent scheme in the divine conduct, and exhibit a plan of reconciling sinners that never could have been discovered by the human understanding. It is the perfection of wisdom, yet in all its features it is opposed to the wisdom of this world.

# EXPOSITION, &c.

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## CHAPTER I. PART I.

ROMANS, I. 1-15.

THIS Chapter consists of three parts. The first contains the Preface to the whole Epistle, and terminates at the end of the 15th verse: the second, comprising only the 16th and 17th verses, enunciates the substance of the grand truths which were about to be discussed. In the remainder of the Chapter, the Apostle, at once entering on the doctrine thus briefly but strikingly asserted, shows that the Gentiles were immersed in corruption and guilt, and consequently subjected to condemnation.

*V. 1.—Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God.*

Conformably to the practice of antiquity, Paul commences his Epistle by prefixing his name, title, and designation. He had, as was usual among his countrymen, two names; by

the first as a Jew, he was known in his own land; by the second among the Gentiles. Formerly his name was SAUL, but after the occurrence related of him, Acts, xiii. 9, he was called PAUL.

Paul was of pure Jewish descent, a Hebrew of the Hebrews, born at Tarsus in Cilicia, but educated at Jerusalem; a Pharisee by profession, and distinguished among the disciples of Gamaliel, one of the most celebrated teachers of his age and nation. Before his conversion, he was an ardent and bigoted supporter of the traditions of his fathers, violently opposed to the humbling doctrines of Christianity, and a cruel persecutor of the church. From the period of his miraculous conversion—from the hour when Jesus met him on the road to Damascus, down to the moment when he sealed his testimony with his blood, his eventful life was devoted to the promulgation of the faith which once he destroyed. Throughout the whole of his long and arduous course, he experienced a continual alternation of trials and graces, of afflictions and benedictions; always borne down by the hand of man, always supported by the hand of God. The multiplied persecutions he endured, furnish a remarkable example of that just retribution which even believers seldom fail to experience in this world. When scourged in the synagogues of the Jews—when persecuted from city to



city, or suffering from cold and hunger in the dungeons of Nero,—with what feelings must he have remembered the time, when “breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord,” he “punished them oft in every synagogue,” and “being exceedingly mad against them, persecuted them even unto strange cities;” or, when he was stoned at Lystra, and cast out of the city as dead, how must he have thought of the conspicuous part he bore in the stoning of Stephen!

*A servant of Jesus Christ.*—Paul, who once verily thought that he ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth, now subscribes himself his servant—literally slave. This is an expression both of humility and of dignity—of humility, to signify that he was not his own, but belonged to Jesus Christ—of dignity, to show that he was accounted worthy to be his minister, as Moses and Joshua are called the servants of God. In the first sense, it is an appellation common to believers, all of whom are the slaves, or exclusive property of Jesus Christ, who has purchased them for himself by the right of redemption, and retains them by the power of his word and Holy Spirit. In the second view, it denotes that Jesus Christ had honoured Paul by employing him in his church, and making use of his services in extending the

interests of his kingdom. He assumes this title to distinguish himself from the ministers or servants of men, and in order to command respect for his instructions, since he writes in the name and by the authority of Jesus Christ.

*Called an Apostle*, or a called Apostle. Paul adds this second title to explain more particularly the first, and to show the rank to which he had been raised, and the employment with which he was intrusted. He was called to it by Jesus Christ himself; for no man could bestow the office of an Apostle, or receive it from the hand of man, like the other offices in the church. Called too, not merely externally as Judas, but internally and efficaciously; and called with a vocation which conferred on him all the qualities necessary to discharge the duties of the office he was appointed to; for the Divine calling is in this respect different from that which is merely human, inasmuch as the latter supposes those qualities to exist in the person called, while the former actually confers them. The state of Paul before his calling, and that in which his calling placed him, were directly opposite to each other.

The office to which Paul was called, was that of an *Apostle*, which signifies one that is sent by another. The word in the original is sometimes translated messenger, but is generally appro-

priated in Scripture to those who were sent out by Jesus Christ to preach his Gospel to the ends of the earth. This appellation was given to the twelve by himself, Luke, vi. 13, and has as to them, a more specific signification than that of being sent, or being messengers. This office was the highest in the church, distinct from all others, in which, both from its nature and authority, and the qualifications necessary for its discharge, those appointed to it could have no successors. The whole system of the man of sin is built on the false assumption, that he occupies the place of one of the Apostles. On this ground he usurps a claim to infallibility, as well as the power of working miracles, and in so far he is more consistent than others who, classing themselves with these first ministers of the word, advance no such pretensions.

As the Apostles were appointed to be the witnesses of the Lord, it was indispensably necessary that they should have seen him after his resurrection. The keys of the kingdom of heaven were committed to them exclusively. They were to promulgate its laws, which bind in heaven and in earth, proclaiming that word by which all men shall be judged at the last day. When Jesus Christ said to them, "as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you," he pledged himself for the truth of their doctrine; just as when the voice

from the excellent glory proclaimed—"This is my beloved Son, hear him;" the Father set his seal to whatever his Son taught. In preaching the Divine word, though not in their personal conduct, the Apostles were fully inspired, and the Holy Scriptures as indited or sanctioned by them, are not their own words, but the words of the Holy Ghost. The most awful anathema is accordingly annexed to the prohibition either to add to or take from the sacred record. Thus the Lord, who had appointed the Apostles not to a ministry limited or attached to a particular flock, but to one which extended generally through all places, to preach the gospel in all the world, and to regulate the churches, endowed them with an infallible Spirit which led them into all truth. They were also invested with the gift of working miracles on every necessary occasion, and of exclusively communicating that gift to others by the laying on of their hands. From all this it followed, that they were perfectly qualified to preach the everlasting gospel, and possessed full authority in the churches to deliver to them those unchangeable and permanent laws to which thenceforth to the end of time they were to be subject. The names of the twelve Apostles of the Lamb are accordingly inscribed in the twelve foundations of the wall of the New Jerusalem; and all his

people are built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone.

Every qualification of an Apostle centred in Paul ; and although he was as one born out of due time, yet by the grace vouchsafed to him, he laboured more abundantly than all the rest. When he here designates himself a called Apostle, he seems to refer to the insinuations of his enemies, who, from his not having been appointed during the ministry of our Lord, considered him as inferior to the other Apostles. The object of nearly the whole of the 2d Epistle to the Corinthians, is to establish his Apostolic authority ; in the third chapter especially, he exhibits the superiority of the ministration committed to the Apostles, over that intrusted to Moses. Thus the designation of servant, the first of the titles here assumed, denotes his general character—the second, of Apostle, his particular office ; and the term Apostle being placed at the beginning of this Epistle, impresses the stamp of Divine authority on all that it contains.

*Separated unto the gospel of God.*—This may regard either God's eternal purpose concerning him, his pre-ordination of him to be a preacher of the gospel to which he was separated from his mother's womb, as it was said to Jeremiah, i. 5,

“ Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations;” or rather it refers to the time when God revealed his Son in him, that he might preach him among the heathen, Gal. i. 16. The term *separated* here used, appears to allude to his having been a Pharisee before his conversion, which signifies one separated or set apart. Now, however, he was separated in a far different manner; for then it was by human pride, now it was by Divine grace. Formerly he was set apart to uphold the inventions and traditions of men, but now to preach the gospel of God.

*The gospel of God*, to which Paul was separated, signifies the glad tidings of salvation which God has caused to be proclaimed. It is the supernatural revelation which he has given, distinguished from the revelation of the works of nature. It denotes that revelation of mercy and salvation which excels in glory, as distinguished from the law, which was the revelation of condemnation. It is the gospel of God, inasmuch as God is its author, its interpreter, its subject; its author, as he has purposed it in his eternal decrees; its interpreter, as God hath himself declared it to men; its subject, because in the gospel his sovereign perfections and purposes towards men are manifested. For the same

reasons it is also called the gospel of the grace of God, the gospel of peace, the gospel of the kingdom, the gospel of salvation, the everlasting gospel, the glorious gospel of the blessed God. This gospel is the glad tidings from God of the accomplishment of the promise of salvation that had been made to Adam. That promise had been typically represented by the institution of sacrifice, and transmitted by oral tradition. It had been solemnly proclaimed by Enoch and by Noah before the flood; it had been more particularly announced to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob; by Moses, it was exhibited in those typical representations contained in the law, which had a shadow of good things to come. Its fulfilment was the spirit and object of the whole prophetic testimony, in the predictions concerning a new covenant, and in all that was foretold respecting the advent of the Messiah.

*V. 2.—Which he had promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures.*

By declaring that the gospel had been before *promised*, Paul tacitly repels the accusation that it was a novel doctrine. At the same time he states the reason why nothing new is to be admitted in religion, namely, its divine origin. He further shows in what respect the Old and New Testaments differ—not as containing two

religions essentially dissimilar, but as exhibiting the same grand truth predicted, prefigured, and fulfilled. The Old Testament is the promise of the New, and the New the accomplishment of the Old. The gospel had been promised by all the prophecies which foretold a New Covenant,—by those which predicted the coming of the Messiah,—by all the observances, under the law, that contained in themselves the promise of the things they prefigured—by the whole of the legal economy, that preceded the gospel, in which was displayed the strictness of Divine justice, which in itself would have been a ministration only of condemnation, had it not been accompanied by all the revelations of grace and mercy, which were in substance and embryo the gospel itself, and consequently foretold and prepared the way for a more perfect development.

*By his Prophets.*—Paul here, also, repels another accusation of the Jews, namely, that the Apostles were opposed to Moses and the Prophets; and intimates, that between them there was a complete agreement. He thus seeks to secure attention and submission to his doctrine, by removing the prejudices that had been entertained against it, and by showing that none could reject it without rejecting the Prophets. In addition to this, he establishes the authority



of the Prophets by intimating, that it was God himself who spoke by them, and consequently that their words must be received as a revelation from heaven.

*In the Holy Scriptures.*—Here he establishes the inspiration of the Scriptures, by pronouncing them *holy*, and asserting that it was God himself who spoke in them ; and shows whence we are now to take the true word of God and of his Prophets, not from oral tradition, which must be uncertain and fluctuating, but from the written word, which is certain and permanent. He teaches, that we ought always to have recourse to the Scriptures; for that, in regard to religion, whatever is not contained in them is really novel, although it may have passed current for ages ; but all that is found there is really ancient, although it may have been lost sight of for a long period.

*V. 3.—Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh.*

The gospel of God concerns his Son ; the whole of it is comprised in the knowledge of Jesus Christ ; so that whoever departs one step from him departs from the gospel. For as Jesus Christ is the divine image of the Father, he is set before us as the real object of our faith. It is of him that the gospel of God, promised by the Prophets, treats ; so that he is

not simply a legislator or interpreter of the divine will, like Moses, and the Prophets, and the Apostles. Had the law and the gospel been given by others than Moses and the Apostles, these two economies would not have been affected in their essential characteristics. But it is altogether different respecting Jesus Christ, who is exclusively the Alpha and Omega of the gospel, its proper object, its beginning and its end. For it is he who founded it by his blood, and who has communicated to it all its virtue. On this account he himself says, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father but by me." He is the Son of God, his own Son, the only begotten of the Father; which proves, that he is truly and exclusively his Son, of the same nature, and equal with the Father, and not figuratively, or in a secondary sense, as angels or men, as Israel or believers.

*Jesus Christ.*—He was called Jesus, the Greek name of the Hebrew Joshua, signifying Jehovah that saveth; and so called by the angel before he was born. "Thou shalt call his name JESUS; for he shall save his people from their sins." Matt. i. 21. The title Christ—that is Messiah, or "Anointed,"—being so often added in designation of his office, at length came into use as a part of his name. *Our Lord.*—This follows from his being the Son of God. The word translated

Lord, answers to the different names or titles which the Hebrews gave to God, but most commonly to that of Jehovah ; where it is used as the name of God, it designates essentially the three persons of the Godhead. It is also applied to any one of the divine persons. In the Acts of the Apostles, and Epistles, it generally refers to Christ ; and in these divine writings this appellation is applied to him in innumerable instances. He is called “ the Lord of glory ;” “ the Lord both of the dead and living ;” “ the Lord of all.” The name *Jesus* refers to his saving his people ; the designation *Christ*, to his being anointed for that purpose ; and that of *Lord*, to his sovereign authority.

On whatever subject Paul treats, he constantly introduces the mystery of Christ. In writing to the Corinthians, he says, “ I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.” This is a declaration, that the doctrine concerning him is the whole of religion, in which all besides is comprehended. In giving directions to the saints at Corinth, respecting the incestuous person, he points out to them Jesus Christ as the Lamb that was sacrificed. If his subject respects the promises he has made, or the engagements he has entered into, he draws our attention to the promises of God, which are all yea and amen in Christ

Jesus. When he treats of the precepts to be obeyed, he regards them as connected with the knowledge of Christ; all duties are considered in relation to him, as the only Saviour from whom we can derive power to fulfil them, the only altar on which they can be accepted, that model according to which they are to be performed, and the motive by which those who perform them are to be actuated. He is the head that gives life to the members, the root which renders the branches fruitful. Believers are the workmanship of God, created in Christ Jesus unto good works. Jesus Christ is the end and object of their obedience, in order that the name of the Father may be glorified in the Son, and that the name of the Son may be glorified in them. Accordingly, the Scriptures speak of the commencement and the continuation of the life of believers as being derived from Christ; of their being planted together with him; buried and risen with him; walking in him; living and dying with him. The principal motives to holiness, in general, or to any particular duty, are drawn from some special view of the work of redemption, fitted to excite to the fulfilment of such obligations. The love of God in Christ, which is the most powerful motive we can have to love him with all our heart, with all our soul, and with all our mind, is set before us in a multitude

of passages. When we are exhorted to look not to our own things only, but also to those of others, it is because we ought to have the same mind in us that was in Jesus, who being in the form of God, humbled himself to do such wonderful things for us. Giving alms to the poor is enforced by the consideration, that he who was rich, yet for our sakes became poor, that we through his poverty might be rich. Forbearance to weak brethren has for its motive the death of Christ for them. If we are exhorted to forgive the offences of others, it is because God, for Christ's sake, hath forgiven us. The duties of husband and wife are enforced by the consideration of the love of Christ, and the relation in which he stands to his church. The motive to chastity is, that we are members of Christ's body, and temples of the Holy Ghost. In one word, the various exhortations to the particular duties of a holy life, and the motives which correspond to each of them, are all taken from different views of one grand and important object, the mystery of redemption. He, "his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness." "Ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." Having referred to Jesus

Christ under the title of the Son of God, the Apostle immediately subjoins a declaration concerning his person as God and man.

*Which was made of, or became, the seed of David.*—The wisdom of God was displayed in the whole of the dispensation that related to the Messiah, who, in his human nature, was, conformably to many express predictions, to descend from David King of Israel. He was born of a virgin of the family of David, and the first promise, containing his earliest name—*the seed of the woman*—indicated that he was in this supernatural manner to come into the world; as also that he was to be equally related to Jews and to Gentiles. To Abraham it was afterwards promised, that the Messiah should spring from him. “In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.” But as this promise was still very general, it was next limited to the tribe of Judah. “The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come.” And to David the Lord had sworn, “of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy throne.” Thus, as the period of his birth approached, the promises concerning him were more particular and more restricted. The wisdom of God was pleased in this manner to designate the family in which the Messiah, as to his human nature, was to be born, that it might be one of the cha-

racteristics which should distinguish, and make him known ; as well as to confound the unbelief of those who should reject him, and deny his advent. For if he has not yet come, it was to no purpose that the prophets foretold that he should descend from a certain family, since all the genealogies of the Jews are now lost. It must, therefore, be admitted, either that these predictions, thus restricted, were given in vain, or that the Messiah must have appeared while the distinction of Jewish families still subsisted, and the royal house of David could still be recognised. This declaration of the Apostle was calculated to have great weight with all, both Jews and Gentiles, who revered the Old Testament Scriptures, in convincing them that Jesus Christ was indeed the Messiah, the hope of Israel.

God has also seen it good to exhibit in the birth of Jesus Christ that union of majesty and dignity on the one hand, and weakness and abasement on the other, which reigns through the whole of his economy on earth. For what family had there been in the world more glorious than that of David, the great King of Israel, most honoured and beloved of God, both as a prophet and a king? And what family was more reduced or obscure when Jesus Christ was born? This is the reason why he is represented by the

prophet Isaiah as a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a branch growing out of his roots, which marks a family reduced, as if nothing more remained but the roots, which scarcely appeared above ground: and by the same prophet, it is also said, "He shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground."

*According to the flesh.*—The prophets had abundantly testified that the Messiah was to be truly man, as well as truly God, which was necessary, in order to accomplish the purpose of his advent. "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death." The Apostle John declares that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This expression could not be employed respecting any mere man, as no one who was only a man, could come except in the flesh. Since, then, Jesus Christ might have come in some other manner, these words affirm his humanity, while at the same time they prove his pre-existence.

*V. 4.—And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.*

The word here translated "declared," imports, according to the sense of the original as



well as the connection, defined or proved. The term properly signifies, to point out or to limit, as when bounds are set to a field to regulate its measurement. Jesus Christ *became* the Son of David, but he did not *become* the Son of God, but was declared, defined, or demonstrated to be so. That Jesus Christ is not called in this place the Son of God with reference to his incarnation or resurrection merely, is evident from the fact, that his nature, as the Son of God, is here distinguished from his descent from David. This expression, the Son of God, definitely imports Deity, as applied to Jesus Christ. It as properly denotes participation of the Divine nature, as the contrasted expression, Son of Man, denotes participation of the human nature. As Jesus Christ is called the Son of Man in the proper sense, to assert his humanity, so, when in contrast with this he is called the Son of God, the phrase must be understood in its proper sense, as asserting his Deity. The words, indeed, are capable of a figurative application, of which there are many examples in Scripture. But one part of the contrast is not to be taken as literal, and the other as figurative; and if the fact of a phrase being capable of figurative acceptation, incapacitates it from expressing its proper meaning, or renders its meaning inexplicably uncertain, no word or phrase could ever be

definite. A word or phrase is never to be taken in a figurative sense, where its proper sense is suitable; for if it may arbitrarily be explained away as figurative, language would be unintelligible. This appellation, Son of God, was indeed frequently ascribed to pious men; but if this circumstance disqualified the phrase from bearing a literal and definite meaning, there is not a word or phrase in language that is capable of a definite meaning in its proper signification.

The Apostle John says, "But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God," by which he means to say who Christ is. Paul, after his conversion, "preached Christ in the synagogue." And what did he preach concerning him? "That he was the Son of God." The great burden of Paul's doctrine, was to prove that Jesus is the *Son of God*; that term, then, must definitely import his Divine nature. It is not only used definitely, but as expressing the most important article in the Christian faith; it is used as an epitome of the whole creed. When the Eunuch asked to be baptized, "Philip said, if thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." The belief, then, of the import of this term, is the substance of Christianity. Faith in Jesus Christ, as the Son of God, over-

cometh the world. "Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that JESUS is the Son of God?" In the confession of Peter, Matthew xvi. 16, this phrase is employed as an epitome of the Christian faith. To the question, "whom say ye that I am," Peter replies, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." We have here the very essence of Christianity. It is asked, who is Christ? The reply, then, must answer this question; it must inform us *who* Christ is, both as to his office and nature. *Thou art the Christ*, is the answer to the question, so far as it respected his person and office;—*thou art the Son of the living God*, is his answer as to his nature. The parable in which the king makes a marriage for his son, speaks the same doctrine, Matt. xxii. 2. Christ is there represented to be the *Son of God*, in the same sense in which a royal heir is the son of the king his father. If, then, the king's son partake of the nature of his father, so must Jesus Christ, the Son of God, partake of the nature of his Father; if the king's son be a son in the perfect sense of the term, and not a son figuratively, in like manner the Son of God is God's Son in the proper sense.

The question put to the Pharisees by Jesus, Matt. xxii. 42, proves that the phrase, *Son of God*, means sonship by nature. "What think ye of Christ? Whose Son is he!" This ques-

tion evidently refers to proper, not figurative sonship. When we ask whose son such a person is, it is palpably evident that we mean real, not figurative sonship. Though the question might refer to him as to his human nature, and enquire who was his father as to the flesh, as the Pharisees understood, still it refers to the natural relation; but that Christ did not mean it exclusively of his father as to the flesh, is clear from his next question; "If David then call him Lord, how is he his Son?" Jesus Christ could not mean to deny that he was the Son of David; but he intimates, that though he was the Son of David as to the flesh, he must be the Son of God in the same sense in which he was David's Son. He asks, who is the father of the Messiah? and from something affirmed of him, intimates that there is a point of view in which he is not David's Son. The answer he received was true, but not full; the supply of the deficiency is "*the Son of God.*" The question, then, and the proper answer, imports that Jesus was the Son of God in the literal sense of the words. Besides, David could not call him Lord as to his human nature; nor was he David's Lord in any sense but that in which he was God.

The condemnation, also, of unbelievers, rests on the foundation of the Saviour's dignity as *the Son of God.* "He that believeth not is con-

demned already; because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." They are condemned not merely for rejecting his message, but for not believing in the name of the only begotten Son of God. Faith, then, respects not only his doctrine, but especially himself as exhibited in his doctrine. Such sonship implies deity.

In this epistle, ch. viii., Paul argues, that God will deny nothing to those for whom he has given his Son. But this argument would be ill-founded, if Jesus be only figuratively his Son. "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" This supposes that the gift of Christ is greater than the gift of all other things besides, and that in such a disproportion as to bear no comparison, and to need no statement. If so, can he be any thing else than truly Divine? Had he been the highest of created beings, it would not follow as a self-evident consequence, that such a gift of him implied the gift of all things else.

The epithets attached to this phrase, Son of God, show it to import proper sonship. Jesus is called God's *own* Son—the *beloved*—the *well-beloved* Son—the *begotten*—the *only begotten Son of God*. This sonship, then, is a sonship, not only in a more eminent degree, but in a sense

in which it is not true of any other in the lowest degree. God has other sons, but he has no other son in the sense in which Jesus is his Son. He has no other son who enjoys the community of his nature. Therefore this son is called his begotten, or his only begotten Son. A begotten son is a son by nature, and Jesus must be designedly so designated, to distinguish his natural sonship from that which is figurative. The phrase is rendered still more definite by the addition of the word *only*. Jesus is the *ONLY begotten Son*, because he is the only Son of God in the proper sense of the term. Other sons are figuratively sons, but he is the begotten Son, and the *only begotten Son*.

The phrase *own Son*, imports the truth of the sonship by another term, and is therefore an additional source of evidence. *Own Son*, is a son by nature, in opposition to the *son of another*—to a *son by law*, and to all *figurative sons*. Christ, then, is God's *own Son*, because he is his son by nature, because he is not his son by adoption in the view of the law, and because he is his son in opposition to figurative sonships.

That the words, *I and my Father are one*, John x. 30, mean unity of nature, and not unity of design, is clear from our Lord's account of the charge of the Jews; they charged him with blasphemy, for calling himself the Son of God.

“ Say ye of him whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest, because I said, I am the Son of God?” Now, the words used were not, *I am the Son of God*; the words, *I and my Father are one*, must therefore be the same in import, as I am the Son of God; but if the expression, I and my Father are one, is the same in import as I am the Son of God, the former cannot mean, I am one in design with my Father. Jesus, in the 36th verse, represents the Jews as charging him with blasphemy, not for saying that he was God, but for saying that he was the Son of God. This incontrovertibly proves that the Jews understood the phrase, Son of God, as importing Deity. The phrase is blasphemous when applied to a mere creature in no other sense than as importing Deity.\*

*With power.*—Some explain the meaning of this to be, that by his resurrection, Jesus Christ was powerfully declared to be the Son of God. But he was not merely powerfully declared—

\* See Mr. Carson's triumphant “ Reply to Dr. Drummond's (Arian) Essay on the Doctrine of the Trinity,” published in Dublin. The above subject is there fully discussed, and contains a masterly exposition of John x. 30–39. Mr. Carson closes a long dissertation on the import of the term, “ the Son of God,” by saying, “ If I have not shown that it definitely expresses Deity, as applied to Jesus Christ, I would despair of proving that the name of Jesus Christ is in the Bible.”

which would intimate the high degree of the evidence—but, according to the Apostle, he was absolutely declared to be the Son of God. Some again suppose, that he was declared to be the Son of God by the power of the Father who raised him up. If this had been intended, it would not, it appears, have simply been said with power, but by the power and glory of the Father, as in Rom. vi. 4, and 2 Cor. xiii. 4. The expression, with power, is to be construed with that of the Son of God, which immediately precedes it, not with the word declared, and signifies *invested with power*. From the moment of his resurrection, Jesus Christ entered on his mediatorial power over all things, as he himself declares, Matt. xxviii. 18; John xvii. 2. He then appeared possessed of eternal and sovereign power, and that in opposition to the semblance of weakness in which he had appeared on earth. The dignity of his person having remained for some time concealed under the veil of weakness, his resurrection gloriously displayed his ineffable power as the conqueror of death, and by his power also evinced his dignity as the Son of God.

According to *the Spirit of Holiness*.—There are various interpretations of these terms, but the proper antithesis can only be preserved by referring them to Christ's Divine nature. If the



words are capable of this application, we need not hesitate to assign it in this place; and though the phrase is unusual, there can be no doubt that it is capable of this meaning. It is equally unusual in whatever sense it may be applied. This circumstance, then, cannot prevent it from referring to the deity of Jesus Christ in direct contrast to his humanity. *Spirit of Holiness* may be used here rather than the phrase *Holy Spirit*, because the latter is usually assigned to the third person of the Trinity. Though the exact expression does not occur elsewhere in the Scriptures, other passages corroborate this meaning, as "the Lord (that is, Christ) is that Spirit," 2 Cor. iii. 17. He is called "a quickening Spirit," 1 Cor. xv. 45, which character belonged to him in a particular manner after his resurrection, when he appeared as the spiritual head of His Church, communicating spirit and life to all his members. The unusual expression, Spirit of Holiness, appears then, here, to denote his deity in contrast with his humanity, characterising him as God, who is a Spirit essentially holy.

In the verse before us, connected with the preceding, we see that it is upon the foundation of the union of the Divine and human natures, in the person of the Messiah, that Paul proceeds to establish all the great and important truths which he sets forth in this epistle. In another

passage he afterwards asserts this union in nearly the same words: "Of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen." Rom. ix. 5.

In the same manner Matthew commences his Gospel. He traces the genealogy of the human nature of Jesus Christ, and afterwards declares his Divine nature. Matt. i. 18, 21, 23. Mark begins by proclaiming him to be the Son of God. "As it is written in the prophets, Behold I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee. The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord (of Jehovah), make his paths (of our God) straight." Mal. iii. 1; Isaiah xl. 3. Luke introduces his Gospel by asserting his Divine nature. In speaking of the coming of John the Baptist, he says, "And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God; and he shall go before Him in the spirit and power of Elias;" and afterwards he declares his genealogy according to his human nature. Luke i. 16, and iii. 23. John commences his Gospel, by saying, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God;" and afterwards, "the Word was made flesh." John i. 1-14. Nearly in the same terms he commences and closes his first epistle. The leading truth which the apostles

taught when they preached to the Jews at Jerusalem was, that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, the Messiah promised, who had been crucified, and who was raised from the dead, and exalted to the right hand of the Father; and the same great truth was declared to Cornelius, when the gospel was first preached to the Gentiles. The foundation of all that the Apostle advances in the Epistle to the Hebrews respecting the superiority of the New over the Old Covenant, is established upon the union of the divine and human natures of Jesus Christ. Having announced that he is the Son of God, he determines the import of that title, by quoting a passage which ascribes to him the name, the throne, the kingdom, the righteousness, and the eternity of God. "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever; a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom." The Apostle Peter begins his first epistle by referring to the resurrection of Jesus Christ, and his second, by designating him as "our God and Saviour." And as in the last prophetic book of the Old Testament the Messiah is called Jehovah, so the prophetic book which terminates the New Testament, opens with announcing him to be Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty; and closes in a similar manner, "I am Alpha and Omega, the

beginning and the end, the first and the last," which signifies the self-existent eternal Jehovah.

*By the resurrection from the dead.*—His resurrection defined or determined Jesus Christ to be the person spoken of by the prophets as the Son of God, and was the authentic and solemn judgment of God pronouncing him to be his Son. As it is also written in the second Psalm, "Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee," Acts xiii. 33. In Scripture, things are often said to be done when they are publicly declared and manifested. When the Son of God was raised from the dead, his eternal dignity, which was before concealed, was brought to light. By his resurrection, God manifested to the universe that Christ was his only begotten Son. The Apostle having in the foregoing verse called Jesus Christ the Son of God, here adds, that he was declared to be the Son of God by the resurrection from the dead. His resurrection then did not constitute him the Son of God, it only evinced that he was truly so. Jesus Christ had declared himself to be the Son of God, and on this account the Jews charged him with blasphemy, and asserted that he was a deceiver. By his resurrection, the clear manifestation of the character he had assumed, gloriously and for ever terminated the controversy which had been maintained during the whole of his ministry on earth. In raising him

from the dead, God decided the contest. He declared him to be his Son, and showed that he had accepted his death in satisfaction for the sins of his people, and consequently that he had suffered not for himself, but for them, which none could have done but the Son of God. On this great fact of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, Paul rests the truth of the Christian religion, without which, the testimony of the Apostles would be false, and the faith of God's people vain. "But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept." His resurrection is a sure pledge that they who sleep in Jesus, God at his second appearance will bring with him. As he triumphed in his resurrection over all his enemies, so his people shall arise to victory and blessedness. Then they shall *know* the power of the resurrection of Jesus, the grandeur of that event, and their interest in it.

The resurrection of Jesus Christ proved his sonship, because he had claimed that character during his life, and had appealed in proof of it to his resurrection, John, ii. 19. Had this testimony been untrue, it could not have taken place. And it not only proved his own eternal power and Godhead, but also manifested his oneness and union in all the perfections and distinguishing characters which constitute Godhead, in common with the Father and the Holy

Ghost, each of these glorious persons concurring in that act, as we learn from other Scriptures.

Professor Stuart, in his Commentary, asks in this place, ‘How could the *resurrection* declare, ‘in any special manner, that Christ was the Son ‘of God? Was not Lazarus raised from the ‘dead? Were not others raised from the dead ‘by Christ, by the Apostles, by Elijah, and by the ‘bones of Elisha? And yet was their resurrec- ‘tion proof that they were the sons of God? God ‘did indeed prepare the way for universal domi- ‘nion to be given to Christ, by raising him from ‘the dead. To the like purpose is the Apostle’s ‘assertion in Acts xvii. 31. But how an event ‘common to him, to Lazarus, and to many others, ‘could of itself demonstrate him to be the Son of ‘God, *ἐν δυνάμει*—remains yet to be shown.’ This is astonishing reasoning. It shows that Mr Stuart is entirely mistaken as to the manner in which the resurrection of Christ, bears testimony to his character. Jesus Christ came into the world professing to be the Son of God, and was put to death for that profession. His resurrection then was God’s seal to the truth of his pretensions. In itself it did not testify whether he was God or man only. But it fully established the truth of every thing taught by him; and as he taught his own Godhead, his resurrection is proof of his divine nature. But how could it ever be sup-

posed that the resurrection of Lazarus would prove as much for him as for Christ? Lazarus did not, before his death, profess to be the Son of God and Mediator. He never predicted his resurrection as an event which was to decide the justice of his pretensions; and had he done so, he would not have been raised to confirm a falsehood. Professor Stuart's argument concludes as strongly against the proof of sonship, in any sense, from the resurrection of Christ, as against proper sonship. The mere fact of being raised from the dead is not evidence of being even a good man. But in whatever sense Jesus is the Son of God, his resurrection is here stated by the Apostle to be the proof.

Before his departure Jesus Christ told his disciples, that when the Comforter came he should convince the world "of righteousness, because," said he, "I go to my Father, and ye see me no more." In raising him from the dead, and receiving him up into glory, God declared that the righteousness which Jesus came to bring in was accomplished. His honourable reception from his Father who sent him, furnished the most complete proof that he had faithfully fulfilled the purposes of his mission. "For if," says Archbishop Usher, "he had broken prison and made an escape, the payment of the debt, which as our surety he took upon himself, being not yet

satisfied, he should have been seen here again: Heaven would not have held him more than Paradise did Adam, after he had fallen into God's debt."

*V. 5.—By whom we have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith among all nations, for his name.*

One of the first acts of the power of Jesus Christ, after his resurrection, was to give his Spirit and his grace to those who were chosen by him, to qualify them to be his witnesses and the heralds of his gospel. Paul was among that number, although appointed at a later period than the others. *We have received.* He here speaks of himself in the plural number. He does not appear to use this style that he may include the rest of the apostles; what is true of him will, however, as to every thing essential, apply to all the others. He distinguishes these two things, *Grace and Apostleship.* The first, which he had experienced in his conversion, and in every subsequent part of his course, he had received from Jesus Christ; and by him also he was appointed to the office of an Apostle, to the discharge of which that grace was indispensably necessary.

*To the obedience of faith.*—Paul, as an Apostle, was commissioned to preach the gospel in order to the obedience of faith. Some understand this of the obedience which faith produces; but



the usual import of the expression, as well as the connexion in this place, determines it to apply to the belief of the gospel. Obedience is no doubt an effect produced by that belief, but the office of an Apostle was, in the first place, to bring men to believe the gospel. This is the grand object which includes the other. The gospel reforms those who believe it, but it would be presenting an imperfect view of the subject to say, that it was given to reform the world. It was given that men might believe and be saved. The obedience, then, here referred to, signifies submission to the doctrine of the gospel. This is quite in accordance with those passages in which the expression is elsewhere found, as in Acts, vi. 7; Rom. vi. 17, xvi. 26; Gal. iii. 1; 2 Thess. i. 8; 1 Pet. i. 22; and Rom. x. 3; where the Israelites are charged with not *submitting* to the righteousness of God, and especially in the 16th verse of that chapter it is said —“ But they have not all *obeyed* the gospel: for Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed *our report?*” “ This is his commandment, that we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ.” 1 John, iii. 23.

The object of faith is not only a promise, but a promise accompanied with a command to accept it. For since it is God who promises, his majesty and his authority accompany his pro-

mise. In respect, then, to the promise, that which on our part corresponds to it is called faith, but in regard to the commandment which enjoins us to receive the promise, the act on our part is obedience. On this account, unbelief is called in Scripture rebellion. Faith is an act of submission, or the surrendering ourselves to God contrary to the natural opposition of our minds, in order that he may possess and conduct us, and make us whatever he pleases. When therefore that opposition is overcome by the weapons with which the Apostles were armed, namely, the word of truth, our submission is called the obedience of faith. "This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent." The obedience of faith which his people render to Jesus Christ is an adoration which supposes his deity; for when reason entirely submits and is swallowed up in his authority, it is a real adoration. "Faith," says Calvin on this passage, "is adorned with the title of obedience, because the Lord calls us by his gospel, and by faith we answer when he calls us; as, on the contrary, unbelief is the height of all rebellion against God."

*Among all nations.*—Paul here assigns the reason why he preaches to Gentiles, namely that it is the destination of his office or Apostleship, and not solely his own choice, Gal.

ii. 7. In past ages God had suffered all nations, with the exception of the Jews, to walk in their own ways, although he had not left himself without witness in the works of creation and providence. Both in the universal Deluge, and also upon other occasions, he had manifested his wrath on account of sin, and his determination to punish it. But after the establishment of the nation of Israel in Canaan, after the institution of his public worship among them, and after he had given to them his written revelation, he did not generally interpose his authority in a visible manner, to turn the nations from the ways they had chosen. Although, therefore, the times of that ignorance God had winked at, he now commanded all men to repent. For thus it is written, that when Christ suffered and rose from the dead, "repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations," Luke, xxiv. 47. And accordingly Paul closes this epistle by declaring that it was by the commandment of the everlasting God that the mystery, which had been kept secret from ages and generations, should be made known to all nations, in order to the obedience of faith. This was in conformity to the commission given by the Lord himself to his eleven Apostles, to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature;

and likewise to the particular command afterwards received by Paul respecting the Gentiles, "To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God." Thus the gospel of the uncircumcision was in a special manner committed to Paul, to which in the verse before us he refers.

*For his name.*—The gospel is preached among all nations for the obedience of faith, but paramount to this is the glory of the name of Jesus Christ. The name, the glory, and the authority of God have the same signification. The world was created for God's glory, and his glory is the chief end of the restoration of sinners. The acts of his goodness to his people are declared to be done for his own name's sake, and for the same end his judgments also are executed on sinners for his own name, Rom. ix. 17. Men are very unwilling to admit that God should have any end with respect to them greater than their happiness. But his own glory is every where in the Scriptures represented as the chief end of man's existence, and of the existence of all things. It is in the name of Jesus that his people are taught to pray and we are baptized into the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, as into one name. This affords unanswerable proof of the divinity of Christ. Paul was a chosen vessel to bear his

name before the Gentiles, Acts, ix. 15. This verse concludes the general introduction to the Epistle; the easy transition to the particular address should not pass unnoticed.

V. 6.—*Among whom are ye also the called of Jesus Christ.*

Those to whom Paul wrote, were included among the nations to whom his commission extended. He mentions this that it might not appear strange that he addresses them for the purpose of instructing them, but that, on the contrary, they should receive what he wrote with due respect and confidence. He was unknown to them by sight; he was far distant from them. They might say, what interest had he in them? He assures them that his Apostleship regarded and comprehended them, and that he did nothing beyond his calling when he desired to increase their knowledge, and confirm their faith. They were *the called of Jesus Christ*. Thus he had a double right, and was laid under a double obligation to address them, both as being of the nations to whom his commission extended, and also as having already become obedient to the faith. The Apostolic commission consisted of two parts, first, to make disciples, and then to teach them to observe all things that Jesus had commanded. Thus Paul had a measure that reached even to those to whom he now wrote, as he had to the Church at Corinth, 2 Cor. x. 13.

*Of Jesus Christ.*—Not only called to Jesus, but called by him ; for he is not only that glorious person to whom we ought to go, but who himself says, *Come unto me.* The believers at Rome were called both with an external calling by the gospel, and also with an internal calling by the Holy Spirit. Both these callings are ascribed to the Father, and also, as in this passage, to Jesus Christ, because the Son, as Mediator, is the minister of the Father, and executes all things for him. As the High Priest of his people, he has done for them all that is required for establishing the New Covenant ; but as the Prophet and King of his Church, he converts them, and leads them to the Father. This expression, the called of Jesus Christ, imports that they belonged to him, as in Isaiah, xlvi. 12, “Israel, my called,” that is, who are mine by the right of calling.

*V. 7.*—*To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints : Grace to you, and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

*To all.*—The Apostle here addresses all the saints at Rome without distinction, whether they were Jews or Gentiles, rich or poor, learned or unlearned, bond or free. He does not distinguish the pastors from the people, but addresses himself to them all in common—what he writes being equally intended for their common in-

struction and edification. He addresses them by three designations, *Beloved of God*, *Called*, *Saints*. They were saints, because they were called, and they were called because they were beloved of God. Their character as saints then was not the cause, but the effect, of their being beloved of God.

*Beloved of God.*—In opposition to the rest of men whom God hath left in unbelief and the corruption of the world. Here then, is the electing love of God placed first in order. It is that love wherewith he loved them when they were dead in sins, Eph. ii. 5. It is the greatest love that God can show to man, being everlasting love, which originates with himself. It is purely gratuitous, and not from foreseeing any thing worthy in those who are the objects of it, but going before all that is good in the creature, and bringing with it infinite blessings. It has for its primary object Jesus Christ, the beloved of the Father; and those whom he beholds in him, although in themselves children of wrath, he loves in him. This love is unvarying from eternity and through eternity, although God's dealings towards his people may vary, as it is declared in the 99th Psalm—"He taketh vengeance on their inventions." He may thus be displeased with them, as it is said, "The thing that David did displeased the Lord," but his

love to them remains the same, like the love of a father to a child, even when he chastens him for his disobedience.

*Called.*—The first outward effect of election, or of the love of God to his people, is his calling them, not merely by the word, which is common to *many*, but by the Holy Spirit, which is limited to *few*, Matth. xxii. 14. “I have loved thee with an everlasting love; therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee,” Jer. xxxi. 3. The election, then, of believers, is to be traced through their calling, 2 Peter, i. 10, and their calling to the everlasting love of God.

*Saints.*—The end of the Divine calling is to convert sinners into saints or holy persons. Their sanctification is not an external or figurative consecration, as that of Israel was, but a real consecration by which they are made to give themselves to God. It arises from union with Jesus Christ, which is the source of the sanctification of his people, and it consists in internal purity of heart, for God purifies the heart by faith. It supposes a real change of disposition a new creation, for “if any man be in Christ he is a new creature.” “That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.” They were not then saints by natural birth, nor did they make themselves saints either in whole or in part; but they were made



so altogether by sovereign grace resulting from sovereign love. All believers are saints, and in one sense all of them are equally sanctified. They are equally separated or consecrated to God, and equally justified, but they are not all equally holy. The work of sanctification in them is progressive. There are babes, and young men, and fathers in Christ. Some are weak in faith, and some are strong, but none of them are yet perfect, neither have they attained to that measure of holiness at which it is their duty constantly to aim, Phil. iii. 12. They are therefore commanded to "grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." "The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." "Certainly, according to Paul," says Calvin, on this place, "the praise of our salvation does not depend upon our own power, but is derived entirely from the fountain of God's love to us. What other cause but his own goodness can moreover be assigned for his love? On this also depends his calling, by which, in his own time, he seals the adoption in those who were first gratuitously chosen by him. From these premises the conclusion follows, that none truly associate themselves with the faithful, who do not place a certain degree of confidence in the Lord's kindness to them; although undeserving

and wretched sinners, being raised by his goodness, they aspire to holiness. For he hath not called us to uncleanness, but to holiness."

*Grace to you, and peace.*—In this way the Apostles usually commence their epistles to the Churches. In those addressed to individuals, mercy is sometimes added to grace and peace. Grace is uniformly placed first in order, because it is the source whence all the blessings of salvation flow. It is to the praise of his grace that God exercises mercy to sinners, and brings those who were his enemies into a state of peace with him. Grace differs from mercy, as it regards the unworthiness, while mercy regards the sufferings of its objects.

Grace is spoken of in Scripture in three points of view, either as the unmerited favour of God towards men as *existing in himself*, or as *manifested in the gospel*, which is called the gospel of the grace of God, or in its *operation in men*. Every part of redemption proceeds on the footing of grace. It originates in the grace of God, and flows in its first manifestations and in all its after acts, from the same unceasing fountain, in calling, regenerating, justifying, adopting, sanctifying, strengthening, confirming grace, in one word, it is all of grace. On this account Peter calls God *the God of all grace*, which teaches that God is in himself towards his people grace—

grace in his very nature—that he knows what each of them needs, and lays it up for them, and communicates it to them. The whole of the salvation of man, from the counsels of God from eternity is planned and executed to the praise of the glory of his grace, Eph. i. 6.

In the operation of grace in the soul, men are not simply passive, nor can it be said that God does a part, and they do the rest; but God produces all, and they do all. God is the sole author and source of their acts, but they themselves properly are the agents. In some respects, they are wholly passive, and in others wholly active. In the Scriptures the same things are spoken of as coming from God, and as coming from men. It is said that God purifies the hearts of believers, Acts, xv. 9, and that they purify themselves, 1 John, iii. 3. They are commanded to work out their own salvation with fear and trembling, because it is God who worketh in them both to will and to do of his good pleasure, Phil. ii. 12. It is not the Holy Spirit, but themselves, by virtue of his power, who love God and their neighbour, who fear the Lord, who confide in him, and trust in his promises. Paul designates as fruits of the Spirit love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance. The origin of them all is the Holy Spirit; it is

from him they are derived ; but in their exercise or developement they properly belong to believers. If any one falsely infers from the doctrine of grace that there remains nothing for man to do, because it is the grace of God that leads him to act, he knows not what he says, or whereof he affirms. He might with the same reason conclude that as God is the Author of our existence, of our souls, and of all our faculties, therefore we can neither think, nor reason, nor love. Grace is in our hearts a living principle, implanted by God, and at his sovereign disposal. To exercise this principle, is as much our duty as to preserve our life and health ; and as the care which these require demand attention and certain acts of the will, in the same manner the exercise of grace in the soul supposes corresponding dispositions and acts. But it is not thus with grace as *manifested*, which is an object of choice, received or rejected, according as operating grace has acted in us or not. In this manner grace, as the principle of renovation, by the sole operation of the Holy Spirit, stands in opposition to every notion of independent power in man, by which it might be supposed he could regenerate himself ; while, on the other hand, considered in its exercise, it supposes the efforts of man.

*Peace* Includes every thing that belongs to

the idea of tranquillity in its largest extent. But the foundation of all must be peace with God. Without this the Christian can have no peace, though he should be on good terms with all mankind; but possessing this, God will either give him peace with his enemies, or he will give him peace along with their enmity. The Christian may not only have peace, but joy in the midst of persecution and external affliction. Peace with God is the substance of happiness, because without it there can be no happiness, and with it there is happiness, whatever else may be wanting. This salutation, grace to you and peace, may be considered either as a prayer or a benediction. In the latter sense it bears the character of Apostolic authority.

*From God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.*—God is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the Father of all who are in him. Paul here speaks of God, as both his Father and the Father of all those to whom he wrote, and so constituting one family, whether Jews or Gentiles. God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ, are the source of all grace and peace, and can alone communicate these blessings, which are the gracious effects that flow from the covenant of love and favour of the Triune Jehovah. Here again we see an incontrovertible

proof of the deity of Jesus Christ, for if he were not God, he could not without impiety be thus joined with or invoked along with the Father to impart blessings, of which God alone is the author.

*V. 8.—First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world.*

*First, I thank my God.*—This is a first in order, as if Paul had said, I commence my epistle by giving thanks to God. It proceeds from that feeling of piety, which ought to pervade all our actions; at the same time he gives to those whom he addresses the praise which they deserved. It is also a first in importance, as if he said, above all I render thanks to God for you. He shows that their state was a matter of great joy to him, arising both from his zeal for the glory of God, and from the interest he took in those whom he addressed.

*My God.*—Paul calls God his God, indicating a lively and ardent feeling of love to him, of confidence in him, and of liberty of access, which includes a persuasion that his thanksgivings will be agreeable to God. It is also a confession of his duty, and of the obligations he is under to render thanks to God, because he is his God. It is, besides, an intimation of his own character to those to whom he wrote, as walking in communion with God. This is an example of the

working of the Spirit of adoption, and of a believer taking home to himself in particular the blessing of having God for his God, and of being a partaker of all the blessings of the new covenant flowing from that most gracious declaration, I “will be their God, and they shall be my people.” Of such appropriation there are many instances recorded in the book of Psalms. “I will love thee, O Lord, *my* strength. The Lord is *my* rock, and *my* fortress, and *my* deliverer; *my* God, *my* strength, in whom I will trust, *my* buckler, and the horn of *my* salvation, and *my* high tower,” Psalm, xviii. 1. Job says, “I know that *my* Redeemer liveth.” “I live,” says Paul, “by the faith of the Son of God, who loved *me*, and gave himself for *me*.” Such language it is the privilege of every believer to use, and he will do it in proportion as the love of God is shed abroad in his heart by the Holy Ghost which is given unto him. The Christian can thus address God as *his own* God, and often he should do so even in his public declarations. This displeases the world, because it condemns the world. They affect to consider it as presumption, but it is only a proper expression of our belief of God’s testimony with regard to his Son. Studiously to avoid such expressions on proper occasions, is not to show humility, but to be ashamed of the truth.

Paul thanked God, *through Jesus Christ*, who is our Great High Priest, and presents the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar before the throne. It is through him alone that all our worship and all our works in the service of God are acceptable. Thus not only must our petitions ascend to the Father through the Son, but our thanksgivings also, according to the precept, "By him, therefore, let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to his name." Heb. xiii. 15. We can have no intercourse with God, but through the one Mediator between God and man, and except through him we are not permitted even to return thanksgivings to God.

Paul thanks God for *all* to whom he writes. He had addressed them all as saints, making no exception. It is to such exclusively that the Apostolic epistles are written, whether as churches or individuals, as being all united to Christ, children of God, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Jesus Christ, who should first suffer and afterwards reign with him. In the first churches, in which every thing was regulated by the Apostles according to the will of God, there may have been hypocrites or self-deceivers; but as far as man could judge, they were all believers, or if any among them appeared not to



be such, the churches were told it was to their shame. If any were discovered who had crept in unawares, or were convicted of unbecoming conduct, or who had a form of godliness, but denied its power, from such they were commanded to turn away. They were not to be unequally yoked with unbelievers, wherefore it was said, "Come out from among them, and be ye separate." It was in the confidence that they obeyed such commands, that the Apostles addressed them all, as in the passage before us, as the children of God. In the same manner, in writing to the church at Philippi, Paul, after thanking God for their fellowship in the Gospel, and declaring that he was confident that he who had begun a good work in them would perform it unto the day of Jesus Christ, adds, "Even as it is meet for me to think this of you *all*, because I have you in my heart; inasmuch as both in my bonds, and in the defence and confirmation of the Gospel, *ye all* are partakers with me of grace." The Apostles generally commence their epistles with the most encouraging views of the present state and future prospects of those to whom they write, and on these considerations are founded the exhortations that follow. They first remind those who are addressed of the rich grace of God towards them in Jesus Christ, and the spiritual blessings of which they are made

partakers, for their strong consolation, and then they exhort them to a holy conversation conformable to such privileges. Of this we have a striking example in the first Epistle to the Corinthians, which, although Paul had so many faults to reprehend in them, he commences by declaring that they were sanctified in Christ Jesus—that he thanked God always for the grace given unto them by Jesus Christ, who would also confirm them to the end, that they might be blameless in the day of his coming, reminding them that God was faithful, by whom they were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord. The number of times, no fewer than ten, in which, in the first ten verses of that epistle, Paul introduces the name of Jesus Christ, should be remarked.

In these epistles we find no exhortations to unbelievers; which ought to be particularly observed, as being a key to them, without which they cannot be understood. This is no reason, however, for supposing that exhortations to believe the Gospel ought not to be addressed to those who are still in unbelief. The Gospel is commanded to be preached to every creature, and all should be enjoined, first to believe it, and then to do all that God requires. In the book of Acts, when the Apostles preached to the unconverted, their subject was repentance toward

God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. But in the epistles where they address believers, they also admonish and exhort them to the practice of every duty. There is no exhortation to the performance of any duty which does not imply that it is to be performed in faith. "Without faith it is impossible to please God."

Believers are taught to regulate all their conduct according to the great things which the Gospel reveals, which are freely given to them of God; to be imitators of God, and to live not to themselves but to him, as being not their own, but bought with a price, and therefore bound to glorify God in their bodies and in their spirits, which are his. Their obedience, as described in the Scriptures, is as much distinguished by its motives and its foundation from the morality of the unbelieving world, as it is elevated above it in its nature and effects. It is, in all respects, a life of faith, subject to the authority of God, and is practised under the influence and direction of motives inculcated in the Gospel, of which the light of nature gives no knowledge. Those who have not this faith regard it as a barren speculation, but they who possess it know that it is the sole and powerful source of all their works that are acceptable to God, which are opposed to "dead works," Heb. ix. 14; and that no works are really good, how-

ever excellent they may appear, and however much esteemed among men, or useful in society, which do not proceed from faith.

*That your faith is spoken of.*—It is not the piety of the saints at Rome, but their faith that is here noticed as spoken of. Without holiness no man shall see the Lord; but it is faith in Christ that is the distinguishing mark of the Christian. Paul thanks God for the faith of those to whom he writes. He thus acknowledges God as the author of the Gospel, not only on account of his causing it to be preached to them, but because he had actually given them to believe. That faith is the gift of God, is a truth frequently declared, as in Matt. xvi. 17; Luke, xvii. 5; Acts, xi. 21, xiii. 48, xvi. 14; Rom. xii. 3; Phil. i. 29. This is also acknowledged in all the thanksgivings of the Apostles for those to whom they write, and is according to the whole of the doctrine of the Scriptures. It is from God that every good and every perfect gift descendeth, and a man can receive nothing except it be given him from above. For “all things,” therefore, we are commanded to give thanks. Paul thanks God for his own prayers, 2 Tim. i. 3. Here, as in other places, Paul commences with thanksgiving, thus reminding us that every blessing is from the kindness of God. If we should observe this in blessings

of small importance, we ought to do it much more with respect to faith, which is neither an ordinary nor a common blessing of God.

*Throughout the whole world.*—That is to say, throughout the whole Roman empire, of which Rome being the capital, all that passed there was circulated throughout the whole civilized world. Their faith was proclaimed by the voice of all believers, who alone could form a proper opinion regarding it, for the reference evidently is to their approbation. Unbelievers, who hated both the people of God and their faith, could give no proper testimony concerning it. The commendation of the servants of God was all that the Apostle valued. Thus the faith of the believers whom God had assembled at Rome was held up as an example, and the Apostle here declares, not only for their encouragement, but also to excite them more and more to the performance of their duty, that the eyes of all the servants of God throughout the world were upon them. He says, their faith was *spoken of*, not that he rests in this circumstance, or that he wishes them to rest in their reputation as if he would flatter them. Reputation in itself is nothing. If it be unmerited, it only convinces the conscience of imposture, and when it is real, it is not our chief joy. Paul regards it with respect to those to whom he writes as a mark of

the reality of their faith, and it is on this reality that he grounds his thanksgiving. It was a ground of thanksgiving that they were thus letting their light shine before men, and so glorifying their Father in heaven. If God is thanked for the distinguished faith of these Christians, then not only their faith is his gift, but its measure and advancement are of him. The glory of all that is good in his people belongs to God, and all comes through Jesus Christ.

*V. 9.—For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers.*

*God is my witness.*—This is substantially an oath; and refutes the erroneous and mischievous notion of some who maintain, from a misapprehension of what is said by our Lord and the Apostle James, that all oaths are unlawful. Paul's affection for those to whom he wrote was such, that in making his appeal to God, he desires to expose it to his judgment in respect to its truth and sincerity.

*Whom I serve with my spirit.*—All the service of God is of this kind, but it is here expressed for the sake of energy, and to distinguish the true servants of God who serve in the gospel with their heart in the work, from hirelings whose labours are formal and only external. It expresses the sincerity and ardour of the service

that Paul rendered to God, as if he had said with all his heart and all the faculties of his soul. It also imports the nature of the service in which he was employed, namely, a spiritual service, in opposition to the service of the Priests and Levites in the tabernacle, which was in a great measure a bodily service. On this account he adds, *in the Gospel of his Son*; that is to say, in the ministry of the Gospel in which he laboured for the unfolding of the Divine mysteries to make them known. Thus Paul shows from the character of his ministry, that his obedience was not in pretence only, but in sincerity.

*Without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers.*—Some place these last words, “always in my prayers,” in the beginning of the next verse, as in the Vulgate and the French versions; but the difference is not material. This is a striking proof of the frequency of Paul’s prayers, in which he interceded for those whom he was addressing—“without ceasing”—“always.” In like manner, in writing to the Philippians, he says, “Always, in every prayer of mine for you all, making request with joy.” We thus learn the duty of Christians to pray for one another, and that those who believe the Gospel are as much bound to pray for its success, and the prosperity of the churches, as to labour in the work. Both ought to go together. To pray

without labouring is to mock God : to labour without prayer is to rob God of his glory. Until these are conjoined, the Gospel will not be extensively successful. From many other parts of Paul's writings, we learn how assiduous he was in the duty of prayer, which he so earnestly inculcates on all believers. "Be careful for nothing ; but in *every thing* by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God." Phil. iv. 6.

But since all events are fixed, even from eternity, in the counsels and wisdom of God, of what avail, it may be said, are these prayers? Can they change his eternal counsels, and the settled order of events? Certainly not. But God commands us to pray, and even the prayers of his people are included in his decrees ; and what God has resolved to do, he often gives to their prayers. Instead then of being in vain, they are among the means through which God executes his decrees. If indeed all things happened by a blind chance, or a fatal necessity, prayers in that case could be of no moral efficacy, and of no use ; but since they are regulated by the direction of divine wisdom, prayers have a place in them. After many gracious promises, it is added, Ezek. xxxvi. 37, " Thus saith the Lord God, I will yet for this be enquired of by the house of Israel to do it for them." In this verse Paul



shows his zeal for God and his love for believers, which ought never to be separated. We should love our brethren because we love God. These two things corresponded in Paul to the two favours he had received, which he marked in the 5th verse, namely, "Grace and Apostleship." "God," as if he said, "has given me Grace, and on my part I serve him with my spirit; he has given me Apostleship, and I have you continually in remembrance."

*V. 10.—Making request, if by any means now at length I might have a prosperous journey, by the will of God, to come unto you.*

*Making request.*—Paul's affection for those to whom he wrote impelled him, not once or twice with a passing wish, but at all times, to desire to be present with them, notwithstanding the inconveniences of so long and perilous a journey. He asks of God that by some means now at length he might be permitted to go to them. Thus Christian love searches out new objects to be exercised on, and extends itself even to persons who are unknown to us.

*I might have a prosperous journey, by the will of God.*—This teaches us that God by his providence regulates all that takes place. There is nothing with which Christians should be more habitually impressed, than that God is the disposer of all events. They should look to his

will in the smallest concerns of life, as well as in affairs of the greatest moment. Even a prosperous journey is from the Lord. In this way they glorify God by acknowledging his providence in all things, and have the greatest confidence and happiness in walking before him. Here we also learn that while the will of God concerning any event is not ascertained, we have liberty to desire and pray for what we wish, provided our prayers and desires are conformed to his holiness. But will our prayers be agreeable to God if they be contrary to his decrees? Yes, provided they be offered in submission to him, and not opposed to any known command, for it is the revealed and not the secret will of God that must be the rule of our prayers. We also learn in this place, that since all events depend on the will of God, we ought to acquiesce in them, however contrary they may be to our wishes, and likewise that in those things in which the will of God is not apparent, we should always accompany our prayers and our desires with this condition, if it be pleasing to God, and be ready to renounce our desires as soon as they appear not to be conformed to his will.

*V. 11.—For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established.*

Paul greatly desired to see the believers at

Rome, to impart to them *some spiritual gift*. The opinion of Augustine that this means the love of one's neighbour, in which he supposes the Church at Rome was deficient, has no foundation. It was not a new degree of the spirit of sanctification that he desired to communicate, for this Paul had it not in his power to bestow, 1 Cor. iii. 6. He appears to refer to some of the extraordinary gifts conferred by the Apostles, by which they might be more established in their most holy faith.

*V. 12.—That is, that I may be comforted together with you, by the mutual faith both of you and me.*

*That is.*—This does not mean that what follows is intended as an explanation of what he had just said; for to those to whom he wrote, it must have been sufficiently clear; but is a modification of it respecting his purpose, lest he should appear to consider them as not well instructed or established in their faith. For although he always acted faithfully, no one, as is evident from his writings, was ever more cautious not to give unnecessary offence. He therefore joins himself with those whom he addressed, and refers to the advantage which he also expected reciprocally to derive from them. It is no valid objection to understanding it to be a miraculous gift which he desired to communicate, that he hoped for mutual advantage and

comfort with those to whom he wrote. This comfort or confirmation which he looked for, was not from a spiritual gift to be bestowed by them, but would be the effect of their confirmation, by the gift they received through him. The gift, too, bestowed by him, would be a new proof of the power of God in him, and of his approbation in enabling the Apostle to exert such power. He would be comforted and strengthened in witnessing their faith in respect to his own labours in his ministry, by seeing the kingdom of God advancing more and more, and with respect to his numerous afflictions to which he was on all hands subjected, and also in contrasting the coldness and weakness of many of which he often complains, when he observed the increasing power of divine grace in the saints at Rome. On the other hand, they would derive from Paul's presence the greatest consolation from his instructions in the mysteries of salvation, from his exhortations, which must contribute much to their edification, as well as from his example, his counsels, and his prayers. It is thus the duty of Christians to confirm each other in the faith; their mutual intercourse shows the faith that each possesses. They see that their experience answers as face answers to face in a glass; and, by beholding the strength of faith in their brethren, Christians are edified and confirmed.

V. 13.—*Now, I would not have you ignorant, brethren, that oftentimes I purposed to come unto you (but was let hitherto), that I might have some fruit among you also, even as among other Gentiles.*

Paul's zeal and affection for those to whom he wrote, were not of recent origin; they had long been cherished in his heart. Of this he did not wish them to be ignorant. It is of importance that believers should know the love entertained for them by the servants of God. It is a testimony of the love of God himself. Paul wished to see *some fruit* of his ministry among them. This was his great desire every where in the service of Christ. "I have chosen you and ordained you," said Jesus to his Apostles, "that ye should go and bring forth fruit;" and Paul ardently longed to see the fulfilment of this gracious promise among those to whom he wrote, for believers were his joy and crown.

*As among other Gentiles*, the apostleship of Paul had not been unfruitful, ch. xv. 17. He had travelled through a great part of Syria, of Asia, and of Greece, and every where he had either been the means of converting men or edifying believers. This was a source of much joy to him; but after so many labours, he did not wish for repose. He desired to go to Rome to obtain fruit there also. He had been *let*, or hindered hitherto. Our desires are always pleasing to God when their object is to promote

his glory ; but sometimes he does not see good to give them effect. It was good that it was in David's heart, although he was not permitted, to build the house of God. The times and the ways of God's providence are often unknown to us, and therefore our desires and designs in his service ought always to be cherished in submission to his Divine wisdom. Paul had been hindered till now from going to Rome. This may have happened in different ways, and through what are called second causes. It may have been occasioned by the services he found it indispensable to perform in other churches before leaving them, or it may have arisen from the machinations of Satan, the god of this world, exciting disturbances and opposition in these churches, 1 Thess. ii. 18 ; or he may have been prevented by the Spirit of God, Acts, xvi. 7. His being hindered, by whatever means, from going to Rome, when he intended it, shows that the Apostles were sometimes thwarted in their purposes, and were not always under the guidance of Divine inspiration in going from place to place. This, however, has nothing to do with the subject of their inspiration as it respects the Scriptures, or as it regards their doctrine. Those who raise any objection to the inspiration of the Scriptures, from the disappointments or misconduct of the Apostles,

confound things that entirely and essentially differ.

*V. 14.—I am debtor both to the Greeks and to the Barbarians, both to the wise and to the unwise.*

Paul was their debtor, not by any right that either Greeks or Barbarians had acquired over him, but by the destination which God had given to his ministry towards them. He does not, however, hesitate to recognise his being so, because, when God called him to their service, he was in effect their servant, as he says in another place, "Ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake." The foundation of this duty was not in those whom he desired to serve, but in God, and the force of this obligation was so much the stronger as it was divine; it was a law imposed by sovereign authority, and consequently an inviolable law. With regard to Paul, it included, on the one hand, all the duties of the Apostolic office, and on the other the dangers and persecutions to which that office exposed him, without even excepting martyrdom when he should be called to that last trial. All this is similar to what every Christian owes in the service of God, as far as his abilities, of whatever kind they are, and his opportunities extend.

As the Greeks, under which term all civilized nations were included, were the source of the

arts and sciences, of knowledge and civilization, it might be said that the Apostle should attach himself solely to them, and that he owed nothing to the Barbarians. On the contrary, it might be said, that he was debtor only to the Barbarians, as the Greeks were already so enlightened. But in whatever way these things were viewed, he declares that both the one and the other were equal to him; he was debtor to them all,—to the Greeks, because their light was only the darkness of error or of idle speculation—to the Barbarians, for he ought to have compassion on their ignorance. He was debtor to the *wise*, that is to say, the philosophers, as they were called among the Greeks; and to the *unwise*, those who made no profession of philosophy. He knew that both stood equally in need of the gospel, and that for them all it was equally adapted. This is the case with the learned and the unlearned, who are both altogether ignorant of the way of salvation, till it be revealed to them by the gospel, to which every thing, by the command of God, the wisdom as well as the folly of the world, in one word, all things besides, must yield subjection.

*V. 15.—So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also.*

Paul was always zealous to do his duty, at the same time he always acknowledged his



dependence on God. This is an example which Christians ought to imitate on all occasions, never to deviate from the path of duty, but to leave events in the hands of God. The contrary of this is generally the case. Christians are often more anxious and perplexed about their success, than with respect to their duty. They forget what regards themselves, and wish to meddle with what does not belong to them, but to God. *To you also.* He does not enquire or decide whether they ought to be reckoned among the Barbarians or the Greeks, the wise or unwise; he was ready to preach the gospel to them all.

Here terminates the Preface to the Epistle. The first five verses include the general introduction, the last ten embrace the particular address to those to whom it is written. The introduction contains the name, the character, and the office of the writer; his vindication of the gospel against the cavils of the Jews, proving that it was not a novel doctrine, and that the Apostles were not opposed to the Prophets. It authenticates the whole of the Jewish Canon, and attests its inspiration. It undermines the errors of the Jews respecting tradition, and directs them to the Scriptures alone. It next announces the Messiah as the subject of the gospel; his glorious person as God and man,

his birth and resurrection, his abasement and exaltation, and his almighty power. It finally announces the communication of grace to the Apostle, his appointment to the office he sustained, the purpose for which it was conferred, along with a commission, of which he states the grounds, to all the nations under heaven. Where else shall be found so much matter compressed in so little space,—where so much brevity connected with so much fulness?

In the latter part, in which Paul addresses those to whom his epistle was directed, he introduces many things well calculated to rivet their attention and engage their affections, while at the same time he conveys very grave and salutary instructions. What must have been the feelings of the Roman converts, when they saw the intense interest with which they were regarded by this great Apostle; when they considered the grandeur and value of the gospel to which he was about to call their attention in his epistle; and when they were cheered by the hope of shortly seeing in the midst of them one whose heart glowed with such love to God and such benevolence to them! All this must have tended to produce a reciprocal regard and reverential feeling towards the Apostle; an ardent desire to profit by his instructions, together with much gratitude to God, and many prayers to

hasten his voyage to come among them. Paul did arrive at Rome; but, in the Providence of God, in a very different manner, and in circumstances very different from what he appears to have expected when he prayed for "a prosperous journey." He went there a prisoner in bonds, was shipwrecked on his voyage, and kept in confinement after his arrival. But although he was bound, the word of God was not bound, and all fell out, in the adorable Providence of God, for the furtherance of the gospel. The circumstances, however, in which he was placed were not in the mean time joyous, but grievous. Yet now that he stands before the throne, now that he has received the crown of righteousness, and is numbered among the spirits of just men made perfect, what regret can he experience that, during the few and evil days he spent on earth, he was conducted to Rome through persecutions, imprisonments, storms, and shipwreck, an outcast among men, but approved and accepted of God?

## CHAPTER I. PART II.

ROMANS, I. 16-32.

HAVING concluded his prefatory address, the Apostle now announces, in brief but comprehensive terms, the grand subject which occupies the first five chapters of this epistle, namely, the doctrine of justification by faith.

*V. 16.—For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.*

*I am not ashamed.*—Paul knew from personal experience the opposition which the gospel every where encountered. By the Pagans it was branded as Atheism; and by the Jews it was abhorred as subversive of the law and tending to licentiousness; while both Jews and Gentiles united in denouncing the Christians as disturbers of the public peace, who in their pride and presumption separated themselves from the rest of mankind. Besides, a crucified Saviour was to the one a stumbling-block, and to the other foolishness. But the grand reason which induced the Apostle to commence his discussion by decla-

ring that he was not ashamed of the gospel, is one which applies to every age, as well as to that in which Christians first preached. His declaration implies, that while in reality there is no just cause to be ashamed of the gospel, there is in it something which is not generally acceptable. There must be some temptation to be ashamed of it, else the Apostle would not avow his exemption from such a feeling. Accordingly, the Lord frequently and solemnly guarded his disciples against this criminal shame, enforcing his warnings by the most awful sanction. "For whosoever shall be ashamed of me, and of my words, of him shall the Son of Man be ashamed when he shall come in his own glory, and in his Father's, and of the holy angels." And those who understand what Paul says about the righteousness of God, and the way in which it becomes the righteousness of the sinner, will be at no loss to discover the reason of Paul's assertion. Every scheme of salvation devised by man, as well as every interpretation of the gospel which obscures the grace of God, as manifested in the atonement, is here condemned. In such devices of man there is nothing to occasion shame; they are suited to their natural views. But that in which there is nothing to cause shame in the eyes of this world's wisdom, cannot be that gospel of which Paul deemed it necessary here

to affirm that he was not ashamed. This circumstance also affords the strongest evidence of the truth of the gospel. Had not the Apostles been convinced of its truth, would it not have been madness to invent a forgery in a form which excites the natural prejudices of mankind? Why should they forge a doctrine which they themselves were aware would be hateful to the world? In this declaration, Paul may also have had reference to the false mysteries of the Pagans, which they carefully concealed, because they contained many things that were infamous, and of which they were justly ashamed. When the Apostle says, he is not ashamed of the gospel, it further implies that he gloried in it, as he says, Gal. vi. 14, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ;" and thus he endeavours to enhance in the eyes of those whom he addressed the value and excellence of the gospel, in order more fully to arrest their attention before he entered on his subject.

*The gospel of Christ.*—A little before he had called it the gospel of God, he now designates it the gospel of Christ, who is not only its author, but also its essential subject. The gospel is therefore called the preaching of Jesus Christ, and of the unsearchable riches of Christ. This gospel then, which Paul was ready to preach,

and of which he was not ashamed, was the gospel of God concerning his Son. The term gospel, which signifies glad or good tidings, is taken from Isaiah, lii. 7, and lxi. 1, where the Messiah is introduced saying, "the Lord hath anointed me to preach *good tidings*."

*The power of God unto salvation.*—That is, the gospel is the efficacious means by which God saves men from sin and misery, and bestows on them eternal life; the instrument by which God triumphs in the hearts of men, and destroys in them the dominion of Satan. It is *power*, as opposed to natural impotence and inability, Rom. v. 6, to obtain salvation by any thing we can do; and also in opposition to the law, which cannot save, being weak through the flesh, Rom. viii. 3. It has been observed that the article *the* before power is not in the original. The article, however, is not necessary. The Apostle does not mean power as an attribute, for the gospel is no attribute of God. It is power, as it is the means which God employs to accomplish a certain end. When it is said the gospel is God's power unto salvation, all other means of salvation are excluded.

*To every one that believeth.*—This power of God unto salvation is applied through faith, without which God will neither justify nor save any man, because it is the appointed means of his people's union with Jesus Christ. Faith ac-

cepts the promise of God. Faith embraces the satisfaction and merit of Jesus Christ, which are the foundation of salvation; and neither that satisfaction nor that merit would be imputed, were it not rendered ours by faith. Finally, by faith we give ourselves to Jesus Christ, in order that he may possess and conduct us for ever. When God justifies he gives grace, but it is always in maintaining the rights of his majesty, in making us submit to his law, and to the direction of his holiness, that Jesus Christ may reign in our hearts. *To every one.*—Without any distinction of age, or sex, or condition, of birth or of country, without excepting any one, provided he be a believer in Christ. The expression “every one,” respects the extent of the call of the gospel, in opposition to that of the law, which was addressed to the single family of Abraham.

*To the Jew first, and also to the Greek.*—This distinction includes all nations, for the Jews were accustomed to comprehend under the name of Greek all the rest of the world, as opposed to their own nation. The Greeks, from the establishment of the Macedonian empire, were better known to the Jews than any other people, not only on account of their power, but likewise of their knowledge and civilisation. Paul frequently avails himself of this distinction. *To the Jew first.*—While the evangelical covenant, and



consequently justification and salvation, equally and indifferently regard all believers, the Jews, in a certain sense, held the first rank, as the ancient people of God, while the other nations were strangers from the covenants of promise. And besides this, the preaching of the gospel was addressed to them first, and at the beginning came to them alone; for while Jesus Christ was upon earth he was the minister only of the circumcision, chap. xv. 8. "I am not sent," he says, "but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel;" and he commanded that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, "*beginning at Jerusalem.*" Thus while Jews and Gentiles were united in the participation of the gospel, the Jews were not deprived of their rank, since they were first called.

V. 17.—*For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, The just shall live by faith.*

*The righteousness of God.*—This phrase may, according to circumstances, mean either the personal attribute so called, or the righteousness which God has provided, which he has effected, and which he imputes for justification to all his elect. It is through this righteousness, revealed in the gospel, that the gospel is the power of God unto salvation. Paul reverts to its manifestation, chap. iii. 21, where the signification

of this most important expression will be fully considered. At present it is sufficient to remark, that the grand object of the Apostle is to show that man, having lost his own righteousness, and thereby fallen under condemnation, God has provided for him a righteousness by which, being placed to his account through faith, he is acquitted from guilt, freed from condemnation, and entitled to the reward of eternal life.

*Is revealed.*—This expression regards the assertion in the second verse of this chapter, that the gospel had formerly been promised by the prophets. The righteousness of God must be contemplated at three periods, first, at the period when God purposed it; second, at the period when he promised it; and, third, at the period when he revealed it. He purposed it in his eternal decrees, he promised it after the fall, and now it is actually revealed in the gospel. Paul does not say, that it began only under the gospel to display its efficacy, or that it was not known under the Mosaic dispensation; on the contrary, he was about to shew that the Prophet Habakkuk had referred to it, and in the fourth chapter he proves that Abraham was justified by the imputation of this same righteousness; but he here declares, that the full and perfect revelation of it was made by the gospel, in which it is testified that at length it has been

“brought in,” as had been promised. Daniel, ix. 24. Looking forward to the revelation of this righteousness, the Prophet Isaiah, lvi. 1, says, “Thus saith the Lord, keep ye judgment, and do justice; for my salvation is near to come, and *my righteousness to be revealed.*” The Prophet thus announced in his time that it was *near to be revealed*, and the Apostle affirms that *now it is revealed.*

*From faith to faith.*—Various interpretations have been given of this phrase, although there appears to be little difficulty in ascertaining its meaning. Some explain it as signifying from the faith of the Old Testament to the faith of the New; some from one degree of faith to another, some from the faith of the Jew to the faith of the Gentile, and others altogether of faith. The expression is evidently elliptical; and in order to understand it, it is necessary to observe, that the literal rendering is not “*from faith to faith,*” but “*by faith to faith;*” the same words in the original are thus translated in the same verse, the just shall live “*by faith.*” The meaning then is, the righteousness which is by faith, namely, which is received by faith, is revealed to faith, or in order to be believed. This is entirely consistent with what the Apostle says in chapter iii. 22, where he reverts to the subject, and announces that the righteousness of

God, which is by, or through faith of Jesus Christ, is unto, and upon all them that believe. There is then no difficulty in this expression, especially since the meaning is placed beyond dispute in the above passage, where the same truth is fully expressed.

*As it is written.*—Here is a reference to the Old Testament Scriptures, as attesting what had just been affirmed, thus showing the correspondence between the Old Testament and the New, as was also done in the second verse of this chapter, and teaching us to rest our faith on the testimony of the Scriptures in whatever part of them it is found. *The just shall live by faith*, or rather, following the order of the words in the original, the just by faith shall live. The doctrine, however, is substantially the same in whichever of these ways the phrase is rendered, and the meaning is, they who are righteous by faith, that is, by having the righteousness of God, which is received by faith, imputed to them, shall live. Paul repeats the same declaration in two other places, namely, in Gal. iii. 11, where he proves that men cannot be justified by the law; and also in Hebrews, x. 38th, where he is exhorting those to whom he writes to continue firm in the faith; and immediately afterwards, explaining what he means by that expression, he shows at large, in the following

chapter, that men were saved by faith before, as well as after the coming of the Messiah. In both cases the eye of faith was steadfastly fixed on the same glorious object. Before his advent faith rested on that event, considered in the promise. After the coming of the Messiah, faith rejoices in the accomplishment of the promise. Thus it is only by faith in the testimony of God, as finding his righteousness wrought by the Messiah, that man can be just or righteous in his sight. The passage itself is quoted from the prophecies of Habakkuk, and is generally supposed to relate, in its primary sense, to the deliverance from the Babylonish captivity, which was a type of the deliverance obtained by the gospel. Through faith in the Divine promises, the first was obtained, and the second in like manner is obtained through faith. But in whatever sense the prophet used these words, the Apostle, speaking by the same Spirit, assigns to them their just and legitimate extension. They are true in respect to an earthly and temporal deliverance, and are equally true in respect to a spiritual deliverance.

Many, however, understand such quotations as this, where the Apostle says *it is written*, as mere *accommodation*, not implying prediction of the thing to which they are applied. This is a most unwarranted and baneful method of hand-

ling the word of God. It is in this light that both professors Tholuck and Stuart, in their Commentaries on this Epistle, often view this form of expression. But, on the contrary, it is always used as introducing what is represented as a fulfilment of prediction, or an interpretation of meaning. If Neologians are to be held guilty for explaining the miracles of Christ on natural principles, are *they* less criminal who explain, as mere accommodation of Scripture language, what is quoted by an Apostle as a fulfilment of prophecy? Several quotations from the Old Testament in this epistle are explained by both these writers on the above Neological principle. Professor Stuart, on this passage, says, ‘ It is ‘ not necessary to suppose, in all cases of this ‘ nature, that the writer who makes such an ‘ appeal, regards the passage which he quotes as ‘ *prediction*. Plainly, this is not always the case ‘ with the writers of the New Testament, as ‘ nearly all commentators now concede.’ Professor Tholuck remarks that ‘ the pious Jew ‘ loved to use Bible phrases in speaking of the ‘ things of common life, as this seemed to connect ‘ in a manner, his personal observations and the ‘ events of his own history with those of holy ‘ writ.’ He adds, that the Talmud contains numerous quotations introduced by such forms, “ without,” he continues, “ there being under-

stood any real fulfilment of the text in the fact which is spoken of. This practice was also followed by the Apostles." The subject of quotation by accommodation is one of such paramount importance, involving so deeply the honour of the Holy Scriptures, and at the same time is so lightly thought of by many, that it demands the most serious attention.

Nothing can be more dishonourable to the character of divine revelation, and injurious to the edification of believers, than this method of explaining the quotations in the New Testament from the Old, not as predictions or interpretations, but as mere illustrations by way of accommodation. In this way, many of the prophecies referred to in the epistles are thrust aside from their proper application, and Christians are taught that they do not prove the very things the Apostles adduced them to establish.

The great temptation to this manner of understanding them, is the fact that such prophecies generally, as they lie in the Old Testament, are obviously applied to temporal events, whereas, in the New, they are applied to the affairs of Christ and his kingdom. But this is a difficulty to none who understand the nature of the Old Testament dispensation, and argues an astonishing want of attention to both covenants.

Not only the ceremonies, but the personages, facts, and whole history of the Jewish people, have a letter and a spirit, without the knowledge of which they cannot be understood, either in their true sense, or in a sense at all worthy of God. That the Old Testament predictions then should primarily refer to temporal events in the Jewish history, and in a secondary, but more important view, to the Messiah and the gospel, is quite in accordance with what is taught us every where by the New Testament. Instead of creating a difficulty, this peculiarity is entirely consistent with the prominent features of Christianity, and calls for fresh admiration of the divine wisdom. It is one of those characteristics which prove that the Bible is God's own book; and, as usual, men's attempts to mend it only serve to mar its beauty and obscure its evidence. In Gal. iii. 10, it is asserted, that "as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse." Why are they affirmed to be under the curse? Because *it is written*, "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them." The phrase, *it is written*, is used here to connect an inference or conclusion with the premises on which it is founded. The assertion, that all who are of the works of the law are under the curse, is founded on the thing said



to be written. The phrase, then, is indicative of true fulfilment or interpretation of meaning.

In like manner, what is spoken of, Matthew, xiii. 14, and John, xii. 39-40, is, in Rom. xi. 8, introduced with the phrase, "it is written." By the same phrase also is introduced, Gal. iv. 27, the reference to the prophecy of Isaiah, liv. 1. This must be prediction, because there does not appear to be any reference to a subordinate event in the Jewish history. It is an immediate prophecy of the calling of the Gentiles.

We learn from Gal. iv. 21-26, that even the history of Abraham's family was typical, and the recorded facts of ancient times are explained as predictions of gospel times. "Tell me, ye that desire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law!" In what respect could they hear the law on the point referred to? In the events that took place in Abraham's house. These facts are represented as a part of the law, and the spiritual truth as the proper interpretation.

Not only is the phrase, "it is written," always applied to indicate prediction or interpretation, but it was so understood and applied in our Lord's time. When the priests and scribes were asked where Christ should be born, they answered, in Bethlem, *for thus it is written*, Matt. ii. 5. This phrase then they employed to indicate true fulfilment of prediction.

This very reference to Habakkuk is explained, Gal. iii. 1, as prediction. It is asserted in the beginning of the verse, that no man can be justified by the law, because *it is written* by the prophet. Here the impossibility of justification by the law is founded on the prophecy quoted. But if this prophecy related only to a temporal event in the Jewish history, the fact being so written would not bear out the conclusion. That the prophecy there refers to the justification of sinners before God, as its true and most important meaning, is the necessary import of the passage. So little foundation have these writers for their bold perversions of the word of God on this point. Their doctrine respecting it manifests great ignorance of Scripture.

That passage in Matthew, ii. 15, has been supposed by some to be utterly incapable of interpretation, in the sense of real fulfilment, as prediction, "Out of Egypt have I called my Son." The prophecy in Hosea, xi. 1, evidently refers to the calling of the Israelites out of Egypt. How then can it be the fulfilment of the prophecy according to the application in the Evangelist? Nothing is more easy than the solution of this supposed insuperable difficulty. The words of the prophet have, in the primary, or literal sense, a reference to the historical event: the calling of the Israelites, as nationally the

typical Son of God, out of the land of Egypt ; and, in the secondary or spiritual sense, couched under the figure, they refer to the calling of the true Son of God out of Egypt, where he had gone to sojourn in order to accomplish this prediction. The Son of God is, in Isaiah, xlix. 3, expressly addressed under the name of Israel. It argues the highest presumption, and even blasphemy, to explain this quotation on the principle of accommodation, when the Evangelist says, "that it might be fulfilled." Is mere accommodation fulfilment in any sense? How must infidels sneer at such violent efforts to explain away a difficulty, which is, after all, imaginary. The language here used by the Evangelist, establishes beyond all contradiction the double reference of many of the prophecies of the Old Testament.

Some commentators refer to Acts, xxviii. 25, as an example of a passage which the Apostle quotes as *prediction*, when it is not prediction. This Scripture is supposed to have reference to the Jews, as neglecting all warnings till they were finally carried into captivity. It may have such a reference. But this is not so certain as that it has the secondary reference to the state of the Jews with respect to the rejection of the Gospel. Instead, then, of being received as applied to the latter by way of accommodation, or as illustrative

of the same principle, there is no absolute certainty of a primary reference; but there can be no doubt that it predicts the unbelief and hardness of heart manifested by the Jews in the time of our Lord, and afterwards. This is irresistibly evident from Matt. xiii. 14. Here it is expressly said to be a fulfilling of the prophecy—that “in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith,” &c. The unbelief of the Jews is here in express words stated as the fulfilment of this same prophecy. Is it not wonderful blindness, is it not the most profane temerity, to explain as mere accommodation what the Holy Spirit asserts to be a real fulfilment? The same prophecy is referred to in John’s gospel as fulfilled in the Jews of our Lord’s time, chap. xii. 39. “Therefore they could not believe, because that Esaias said again.” What can more strongly express prediction? Belief was impossible, because of the prediction. They were the words of God, and therefore must be fulfilled. As this is a subject of so much importance, demanding the serious attention of all who tremble at the word of God, and one which is so frequently, I may say so generally, misrepresented, I shall further repeat the following remarks respecting it from my Book of Evidences, vol. i. p. 387, on the Old Testament prophecies.

“It is not as setting aside the literal application of such passages, that the Apostles quote them in their spiritual import; nor in the way of accommodation, as is often erroneously asserted; but in their ultimate and most extensive significations. Nothing has been more mischievous, more audacious, and more dishonourable to the character of revelation, than the doctrine that represents the New Testament writers as quoting the Old Testament prophecies by way of accommodation. It is based on the supposed difficulty or impossibility of explaining the agreement in the literal accomplishment. To this it may be replied, that satisfactory solutions of the cases of difficulty have been given. But though no satisfactory solution were given, the supposition would be inadmissible. It contradicts most explicitly the Spirit of God, and must be rejected, let the solution be what it may. The New Testament writers, in quoting the Old Testament prophecies, quote them as being fulfilled in the event which is related. If it is not truly fulfilled, the assertion of fulfilment is false. The fulfilment by accommodation is no fulfilment in any real sense of the word. This interpretation then cannot be admitted, as being palpably contradictory to the language of inspiration. To quote the Old Testament prophecies in this way could not, in any respect, serve the purpose of

the writers of the New Testament. What confirmation to their doctrine could they find from the language of a prophecy that did not really refer to the subject to which they applied it, but was merely capable of some fanciful accommodation? It is ascribing to these writers, or rather to the Spirit of God, a puerility of which every writer of sound judgment would be ashamed. The application of the language of inspiration by way of accommodation is a theory that has sometimes found patrons among a certain class of writers. But a due respect for the inspired writings will ever reject it with abhorrence. It is an idle parade of ingenuity, even when it coincides in its explanations with the truths of the Scriptures. But to call such an accommodation of Scripture language a fulfilment, is completely absurd. There is nothing in Scripture to warrant such a mode of explanation."

"To say," observes Mr Bell, on the covenants, "that these Scriptures had no relation to these events, what is this, but to give the inspired penman the lie? The question is not what the Old Testament writers intended in such and such sayings, but what the Spirit which was in them did signify. The prophets might often not know the full extent of their own prophecy, but certainly the Spirit by which they spake,

always did. The Spirit in the Old Testament writers was the same who inspired those of the New, 2 Cor. iv. 13 ; therefore, when the latter quote the words of the former as predictive of, and fulfilled in, certain events, the Holy Spirit is pointing out what he himself intended. And who dare say, but that he may point out more fully under the New Testament what he intended in the Old, than ever could have entered into the heart of man? 1 Cor. ii. 9, 10. Surely the only wise God must be allowed to know the full sense of his own words. When the evangelists or apostles tell us that such and such Scriptures were fulfilled in such events, they do not give a new sense to these Scriptures which they never had before, but only show what before was latent with us. To say that any of their quotations from the Old Testament are mere allusions, or only used by way of accommodation to their purpose, beyond the true sense of the words and the intention of the Holy Ghost, effectually cuts the sinews of their argumentation, and of course destroys the proofs they adduce.”—P. 56. The misunderstanding, or rather denial on this point, of the plain import of Scripture, in representing the New Testament writers as quoting from the Old Testament in the way of accommodation, appears to originate, so far as concerns professors Tho-

luck and Stuart, in their want of acquaintance with the nature of the inspiration of the Bible. Were this not the case, they could not have ventured to take such liberties with the Scriptures as appear in their commentaries.\*

The declaration in the 16th and 17th verses, that the gospel is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth, because therein is the righteousness of God revealed, serves as the text or ground of the whole of the discussion that follows in this and the next four chapters.

*V. 18.—For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness.*

Here commences the third division of this chapter, where the Apostle enters into the discussion, to prove that all men being under the just condemnation of God, there remains for them no way of justification but that by grace, which the gospel holds out through Jesus Christ. He here shows that the Gentiles were all guilty, and all subjected to the just judgment of God.

\* On the subject of Inspiration, I refer to my treatise on "The Authenticity and Inspiration of the Holy Scriptures," and to Mr Carson's unanswered and unanswerable treatise on "The Theories of Inspiration of the Rev. Daniel Wilson (now Bishop of Calcutta,) the Rev. Dr Pye Smith, and the Rev. Dr Dick, proved to be erroneous," and to his "Refutation of Dr Henderson's doctrine on Divine Inspiration, with a Critical Discussion on 2 Tim. iii. 16."



*The wrath of God is revealed from heaven.*— Before announcing the doctrine of Grace, Paul lays as a foundation that of wrath; not only because wrath necessarily precedes the other in the order of nature, but because, to dispose men to have recourse to grace, they must be affected with the dread of wrath and sense of their danger. The wrath of God means his vengeance, by ascribing, as is usual in Scripture, the passions of men to God. It implies no emotion in God, but has reference to the judgment and feeling of the sinner, who is punished. This wrath is revealed from heaven. It had been revealed when the sentence of death was first pronounced, the earth cursed, and man driven out of the earthly paradise, and afterwards by such examples of punishment as those of the Deluge, and the destruction of the cities of the plain by fire from heaven; but especially by the universal reign of death throughout the world. It was proclaimed in the curse that the law pronounces on every transgression, and was intimated in the institution of sacrifice, and in all the services of the Mosaic dispensation. In the eighth chapter of this epistle the Apostle calls the attention of believers to the fact, that the whole creation has become subject to vanity, and groaneth and travaileth together in pain. The same creation which declares that there is

a God, and proclaims his glory, also proves that he is the enemy of sin and the avenger of the crimes of men. So that this revelation of wrath is universal throughout the world. But, above all, in the gospel the wrath of God was revealed from heaven when the Son of God came down to manifest the divine character, and when that wrath was displayed in his sufferings and death, in a manner more awful than by all the tokens that God had before given of his displeasure against sin. Besides this, the future and eternal punishment of the wicked is now declared in terms more solemn and explicit than formerly. Under the new dispensation there are two revelations given from heaven, one of wrath, the other of grace.

*Against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men.*—Here the Apostle proceeds to describe the awful state of the heathen world, living under the revelation of nature, but destitute of the knowledge of the grace of God revealed in the Gospel. He begins with accusing the whole heathen world, first of *ungodliness*, and next of *unrighteousness*. After proving the former, which regards their duty to God, he proceeds to the latter, respecting their moral conduct, which he follows out to the end of the chapter. The word *all* denotes two things; the one is, that the wrath of God extends to the whole body of

ungodliness and unrighteousness which reigns among men, without excepting the least part; the other is, that this ungodliness and unrighteousness had arrived at its height, and reigned among the Gentiles with such undisturbed supremacy, that there remained no soundness among them.

The first charge brought under the head of ungodliness, is that of *holding the truth in unrighteousness*. The expression *the truth*, generally in the New Testament, when it stands unconnected, denotes the gospel. Here, however, it is evidently limited to the truth about God, which, from the works of creation and the remains of the law of the conscience, was known to the heathens, of which the Apostle afterwards speaks. Though the word "hold," in the original, signifies to hold fast a thing supposed to be valuable, as well as to restrain or repress, yet the latter is the meaning here. The heathens did not hold fast the truth, but they repressed or restrained what they knew about God. The expression signifies they retained it as in a prison, under the weight and oppression of their iniquities.

But besides this general accusation, the Apostle appears to have had particularly reference to the chief men among the Pagans, whom they called philosophers, and who professed themselves

wise. The declaration that the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness, attacked directly the principle which they universally held to be true, namely, that God could not be angry with any man. Almost all of them believed the truth of the divine unity which they communicated to those who were initiated into their mysteries. But all of them, at the same time, held it as a maxim, and gave it out as a precept to their disciples, that nothing should be changed in the popular worship of their country, to which, without a single exception, they conformed, although it consisted in the most absurd and wicked idolatrous rites, in honour of a multitude of gods of the most odious and abominable character. Thus they not only resisted and constantly acted in opposition to the force of the truth in their own minds, but also held back what they knew of it, and prevented it from being told to the people.

*V. 19.—Because that which may be known of God is manifested in them ; for God hath showed it unto them.*

The Apostle here assigns the reason of what he had just affirmed respecting the Gentiles as retaining the truth in unrighteousness ; namely, that which may be known of God, God hath manifested to them. They might have said, they did not retain the truth in unrighteousness,

for God had not declared it to them as he had done to the Jews. He had, however, sufficiently displayed in the works of creation his Almighty power, wisdom, and goodness, and other of his divine attributes, so as to render them without excuse in their ungodliness, and unrighteousness.

*That which may be known of God.*—That is to say, not absolutely, for that surpasses the capacity of the creature.—God is incomprehensible even by angels, and it is by himself alone that he can be fully and perfectly comprehended; the finite never can comprehend the infinite. Nor do the words before us mean all that can be known of him by a supernatural revelation, as the mystery of redemption, that of the Trinity, &c., for it is only the Spirit of God who has manifested these things by his Word. It is on this account that David says, “He showeth his word unto Jacob, his statutes and his judgments unto Israel. He hath not dealt so with any nation; and as for his judgments, they have not known them.” Ps. cxlvii. 19. But what may be known of God by the works of creation he has not concealed from men.

*Is manifest.*—This respects the clearness of the evidence of the object in itself, for it is not an obscure or ambiguous revelation; it is a

manifestation which renders the thing certain. Not *in them* but *to them*; for the Apostle is referring here only to the external object, as appears by the following verse, and not to the actual knowledge which men had of it, of which he does not speak till the 21st verse.

*For God hath showed it unto them.*—He has presented it before their eyes. They all see it, though they do not draw the proper conclusion from it. In like manner he has shown himself to the world in his Son Jesus Christ. “He that hath seen me hath seen the Father.” Yet many saw him who did not recognise the Father in him. These words, “hath showed it unto them,” teach us, that in the works of creation, God has manifested himself to men to be glorified by them; and that in preserving the world after sin had entered, he has set before their eyes those great and wonderful works in which he is represented; and they farther show that there is no one who can manifest God to man except himself, and consequently, that all we know of him must be founded on his own revelation, and not on the authority of any creature. †

*V. 20.—For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse.*

*Invisible things.*—God is invisible in himself,

for he is a Spirit, elevated beyond the reach of all our senses. Being a Spirit, he is exempted from all composition of parts, so that when the Apostle here ascribes to him "invisible things" in the plural, it must not be imagined that there is not in God a perfect unity. It is only intended to mark the different attributes of Deity, which, although one in principle, are yet distinguished in their objects, so that we conceive of them as if they were many.

*From the creation of the world.*—By the works of creation, and from those of a general providence, God can be fully recognised as the Creator of heaven and earth, and from thence his natural attributes may be inferred. The Apostle here only specifies his eternal power and Godhead, marking his eternal power as the first object which discovers itself in the works of creation, and in the government of the world, and afterwards denoting, by his Godhead, the other attributes that are essential to him as Creator. His *power* is seen to be eternal, because it is such as could not begin to exist, or be communicated. Its present exertion proves its eternal existence. Such power, it is evident, could have neither a beginning nor an end. In the contemplation of the heavens and the earth, every one must be convinced that the power which called these things into existence is eternal. *God-*

*head.*—This does not refer to all the divine attributes, for they are not all manifested in the works of creation. It refers to those which manifest his deity. The heavens and the earth prove the deity of their author. In the revelation of the word, the grand truth is the deity of Christ; in the light of nature, the grand truth is the deity of the Creator. By his power, may be understood all the attributes that are called relative, such as those of Creator, Preserver, Judge, Lawgiver, and others that relate to creatures; and by his Godhead, those that are absolute, such as his Majesty, his Infinity, his Immortality.

*Are clearly seen.*—That which is invisible in itself has, as it were, taken a form to render itself visible, and visible in a manner so clear, that it is easy to discover it. This visibility of the invisible perfections of God, which began at the creation, has continued ever since, which proves that the Apostle here includes, with the works of creation, those of providence in the government of the universe; and it is true, that in both the one and the other, the Divine perfections very admirably appear.

*Being understood by the things that are made.*—The works of creation and providence are so many signs or marks, which elevate us to the contemplation of the perfections of Him who made them, and that so directly, that in a man-



ner these works, and these perfections of their author, are as only one and the same thing. Here the Apostle tacitly refutes the opinion of some of the philosophers respecting the eternity of the world ; he establishes the fact of its creation, and at the same time teaches, contrary to the Atheists, that, from the sole contemplation of the world, there are sufficient proofs of the existence of God. Finally, by referring to the works of creation, he indicates the idea that ought to be formed of God, contrary to the false and chimerical notions of the wisest heathens respecting him.

*So that they are without excuse.*—The words in the original may either refer to the end in view, or to the result—either to those circumstances being intended to leave men without excuse, or to the fact that they are without excuse. The latter is the interpretation adopted by our translators, and appears to be the true meaning. It cannot be said that God manifested himself in his works, in order to leave men without excuse. This was the result, not the grand end. The revelation of God by the light of nature the heathens neglected or misunderstood, and therefore are justly liable to condemnation. Will not then the world, now under the light of the supernatural revelation of grace, be much more inexcusable? If the

perverters of the doctrine that was taught by the works of creation were without excuse, will God sustain the excuses that are made now for the corrupters of the doctrine of the Bible?

When the heathens had nothing else than the manifestation of the divine perfections in the works of creation and providence, there was enough to render them inexcusable, since it depended on themselves to make a good use of them, and the only cause of their not doing so was their perversity. From this, however, it must not be inferred that the subsistence of the world since the entrance of sin, and the providence which governs it, sufficiently furnish man, who is a sinner, with the knowledge of God, and the means of glorifying him in order to salvation. The Apostle here speaks only of the revelation of the natural attributes of God, which make him indeed the sovereign good to man in innocence, but which also make him the sovereign evil to man when guilty. The purpose of God to show mercy is not revealed but by the Spirit of God, who alone seacheth the deep things of God. 1 Cor. ii. 10. In order to this revelation, it was necessary, then, that the Holy Spirit should have animated the Prophets and Apostles. It is, therefore, to be particularly observed, that while, in the next chapter, where the Apostle proceeds to prove that the Jews

are also without excuse, he urges that the forbearance and long suffering, and goodness of God, in the revelation of grace, led them to repentance, he says nothing similar respecting the heathens. He does not assert that God, in the revelation he had made to them, called them to repentance, nor that he held out to them the hope of salvation, but affirms that that revelation renders them inexcusable. This clearly shows, that in the whole of the dispensation regarding them, there was no revelation of mercy, or an accompanying Spirit of grace, as there had been to the Jews. The manifestations made by God of himself in the works of creation, together with what is declared concerning the conduct of his providence, Acts, xiv. 17; and what is again said in chap. 2d of this epistle, v. 14, 15, respecting the law written in the heart, comprise the whole of that revelation which was made to the heathen, after they had lost sight of the original promise of a deliverer to Adam, and the preaching of the righteousness of God by Noah; but in these ways God had never left himself without a witness. The works of creation and providence spoke to them from *without*, and the law written on their heart from *within*. In conjunction they declared the being and sovereign authority of God, and man's accountableness to him. This placed all men under a positive

obligation of obedience to God. But his law thus made known, which admits not of forgiveness when transgressed, could not be the cause of justification, but of condemnation. The whole, therefore, of that revelation of God's power and Godhead, of which the Apostle speaks in this discourse, he regards as the foundation of the just condemnation of men, in order afterwards to infer from it the necessity of the revelation of grace. It must not be supposed, then, that he regards it as containing in itself a revelation of grace in any manner whatever, for this is an idea opposed to the order of his reflections. But how, then, it may be said, are men rendered inexcusable? They are *inexcusable*, because their natural corruption is thus discovered, for they are convicted of being sinners, and consequently alienated from communion with God, and subjected to condemnation, which is thus shown to be just.

V. 21.—*Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.*

*Knew God.*—Besides the manifestation of God in the works of creation, the heathens had still some internal lights, some principles and natural notions, which are spoken of, chap. ii. 12, 15, from which they had, in a measure, the knowledge of the existence and authority of God.

There may be here, besides, a reference to the knowledge of God which he communicated in the first promise after the Fall, and again after the Flood, but which, not liking to retain God in their knowledge, and being "haters of God," mankind had lost. Elsewhere, Paul says, that the Gentiles were without God in the world, Eph. ii. 12; and here he says they knew God. On this it may be observed, that they had very confused ideas of the Godhead, but that they further corrupted them by an almost infinite number of errors. Respecting the general notions that they had of Him, these represented the true God; but respecting their erroneous notions, these only represented the phantoms of their imagination. In this way they knew God, yet nevertheless they were without God. They knew his existence and some of his perfections, but they had so entirely bewildered their minds, and added so many errors to the truth, that they were in reality living without God. They might be said to know God when they confessed him as the Creator of the world, and had some conception of his unity, wisdom, and power. The Apostle may particularly refer to the wise men among the heathens, but the same truth applies to all. They all knew more than they practised, and the most ignorant might have discovered God in his works, had not enmity against him ruled

in their hearts. But when Paul says, Eph. ii. 12, that they were without God, he has respect to their worship and their practice. For all their superstitions were exclusively those of impiety, which could only serve to alienate them from the love and the communion of the true God. They were, therefore, in reality, without God in the world, inasmuch as they set up devils, whom, under the name of gods, they served with the most abominable rites.

*They glorified him not as God.*—Paul here marks what ought to be the true and just knowledge of God, namely, that which leads to his service, by worshipping him in a manner agreeable to him, and worthy of his character. To glorify God signifies to acknowledge and worship him with ascriptions of praise, because of his glorious attributes. Now the heathens, though in their speculations they might speak of God in a certain way consistent with some of his attributes, as his unity, spirituality, power, wisdom, and goodness, yet they never reduced this to practice. The objects of their professed worship were either the works of God, or idols. To these they gave the glory that belonged to God;—to these they felt and expressed gratitude for the blessings which God bestowed on them. God left them not without a witness of his existence and goodness, in that he gave them rain from

heaven, and fruitful seasons; but the glory of these things, and of all other blessings, they rendered to the objects of their false worship. It appears also that the Apostle had it in view that the philosophers in their schools had some proper ideas of God, but in their worship they conformed to the popular errors. Men often justify their neglect of God by alleging that he has no need of our service, and that it cannot be profitable to him; but we here see that he is to be glorified for his perfections, and thanked for his blessings.

*Neither were thankful.*—We should constantly remember that God is the source of all that we are, and of all that we possess. In him we live and move and have our being. From this it follows that he ought to be our last end. Consequently one of the principal parts of our worship is to acknowledge our dependence, and to ascribe to him all things in consecrating them to his service. The opposite of this is what is meant by the expression “neither were thankful,” and this is what the heathens were not, for they ascribed one part of what they possessed to the stars, another part to fortune, and another to their own wisdom.

*But became vain in their imaginations,* or rather in their reasonings, that is, speculations. Paul calls all their philosophy reasonings, because they related to words and notions, divested of

use or efficacy. Some apply this expression, "became vain in their reasonings," to the attempts of the heathen philosophers to explore, in a physical sense, the things which the poets ascribed to the gods. Dr Macknight supposes that the vain object of the wise men was to show that the religion of the vulgar, though untrue, was the fittest for them. Many explanations, equally fanciful, have been given of these words. The language itself, in connexion with the writings of the wise men to whom the Apostle refers, leaves no good reason to doubt that he speaks of those speculations of the Grecian philosophers, in which they have manifested the most profound subtilty, and the most extravagant folly. Their reasonings diverged very far from that truth which they might have discovered by the contemplation of the works of creation, and besides, produced nothing for the glory of God, in which they ought to have issued. In fact, all their reasonings were to no purpose so far as regarded their sanctification, or the peace of their conscience. The whole of what the Apostle here says, aptly describes, and will equally apply to vain speculations of modern times. It suits not only modern shools of philosophy, but also some of those of theology; not only the vain interpretations of Neologians, but of all who explain away the distinguishing doctrines of



revelation. Without being carried away with the learning and research of such persons, every one who loves the Scriptures and the souls of men, should lift up his voice against such degradations of the oracles of God.

*Their foolish heart was darkened.*—"Imprudent heart," as Dr Macknight translates this, comes not up to the amount of the phrase. It designates the heart, or understanding, as void of spiritual discernment and wisdom—unintelligent in divine things, though subtle and perspicacious as to the things of the world. Their speculations, instead of leading them to the truth, or nearer to God, were the means of darkening their minds, and blinding them still more than they were naturally. The Apostle here marks two evils, the one that they were destitute of the knowledge of the truth, and the other, that they were filled with error, for here their darkness does not simply signify ignorance, but a knowledge false and depraved. These two things are joined together.

*V. 22.—Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools.*

It appears that, by the term *wise*, the Apostle, intended to point out the philosophers, that is to say, in general, those who were most esteemed for their knowledge, like those among the Greeks who were celebrated by the titles either of wise men or philosophers. To the two evils remarked

in the foregoing verse, of their foolishness and their darkness, Paul here adds a third—that with all this they believed themselves to be wise. This is the greatest unhappiness of man, not only not to feel his malady, but to extract matter of pride from what ought to be his shame. What they esteemed their wisdom, was truly their folly. All their knowledge, for which they valued themselves, was of no avail in promoting virtue or happiness. Their superstitions were in themselves absurd, and instead of worshipping God, they actually insulted him in their professed religious observances. How wonderfully was all this seen in the sages of Greece and Rome, who rushed headlong into the greatest extravagancies of scepticism, doubting or denying what was evident to common sense. How strikingly is this also verified in many modern philosophers.

So far were the heathen philosophers from wisdom, that they made no approach towards the discovery of the true character either of the justice or mercy of God, while with respect to the harmony of these attributes, in relation to man, they had not the remotest conception. The idea of a plan to save sinners, which, instead of violating the law of God, and lowering his character as the moral governor of the world, magnifies the law, and makes it honourable,

giving full satisfaction to his justice, is as far beyond the conception of man, as to make the world was beyond his power. It is a thought that could not have suggested itself to any created intellect.

Ignorance of the justice of God gave occasion to the manifestation of human ignorance. All the ancient philosophers considered that consummate virtue and happiness were attainable by man's own efforts, and some of them carried this to such an extravagant pitch, that they taught that the wise man's virtue and happiness were independent of God. Such was the insanity of their wisdom, that they boasted that their wise man had in some respects the advantage of Jupiter himself, because his virtue was not only independent, or his own, but was voluntary, whereas that of the divinity was necessary. Their wise man could maintain his happiness, not only independent of man, and in the midst of external evils, but also in defiance of God himself. No power, either human or divine, could deprive the sage of his virtue or happiness. How well does all this prove and illustrate the declaration of the Apostle, that professing themselves to be wise, they became fools !

*V. 23.—And changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things.*

Here Paul produces a proof of the excess of

the folly of those who professed themselves to be wise. Their ideas of God were embodied in images of men, and even of birds and beasts, and the meanest reptiles. *Changed the glory of the incorruptible God.*—That is, the ideas of his spirituality, his immateriality, his infinity, his eternity, and his majesty, which are his glory, and distinguish him from all creatures. All these are included in the term *incorruptible*; and as the Apostle supposes them to be needful to the right conception of God, he teaches that these are all debased and destroyed in the mind of man when the Creator is represented under human or other bodily resemblances. For these lead to conceptions of God as material, circumscribed, and corruptible, and cause men to attribute to him the meanness of the creature, thus eclipsing his glory, and changing it into ignominy. The glory of God, then, refers to his attributes, which distinguish him from the idols which the heathens worshipped. In verse 25, it is called *the truth of God*, because it essentially belongs to the Divine character. Both expressions embrace the same attributes, but in different aspects. In the one expression these attributes are considered as constituting the Divine glory; in the other, they are considered as essential to his being, and distinguishing him from the false gods of the heathen.

It is impossible to conceive of any thing more deplorably absurd, farther removed from every semblance of wisdom, or more degrading in itself and dishonouring to God, than the idolatrous worship of the heathens; yet among them it was universal. The debasing images to which the Apostle here refers, were worshipped and feared by the whole body of the people, and not even one among all their philosophers, orators, magistrates, sages, statesmen, or poets, had a spark of discernment of the enormity of this wickedness, or sufficient honesty to reclaim against it. On the contrary, every one of them conformed to what the Apostle Peter calls “abominable idolatries.”

*V. 24.—Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves.*

*Wherefore God also gave them up.*—The impurities into which the Gentiles were plunged, sprung from their own corrupt hearts. We must therefore distinguish between their abandonment by God, and the awful effects of that abandonment. The abandonment proceeded from divine justice, but the effect from the corruption of man, in which God had no part. The abandonment is a negative act of God, or rather a negation of acting, of which God is absolutely master, since, being under no obligation to give

grace to any man, he is free to withhold it as he sees good ; so that in this withholding there is no injustice. But besides this, it is a negation of acting which men have deserved by their previous sins, and consequently it proceeds from his justice, and is in this view to be considered as a punishment. Sin is indeed the consequence of this abandonment, but the only cause of it is human perversity. God's *giving them up*, then, does not signify any positive act, but denotes his not holding them in check by those restraints by means of which he usually maintains a certain degree of order and appearance of moral rectitude among sinners. God did not, however, totally withdraw those restraints, by which his Providence rules the world in the midst of its corruption ; for if he had done so, it would have been impossible that society could have subsisted, or the succession of generations continued. God, for these ends, still preserved among them some common rectitude, and certain bonds of humanity. But in other respects he relaxed his restraints on the fury of their passions, as a corresponding punishment for their idolatries, in regard to the impurities to which the Apostle here refers. Thus was his justice manifested in giving up those who had dishonoured him to dishonour themselves, in a manner the most degrading and revolting.

V. 25.—*Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen.*

The heathens changed the truth of God, that is, the true idea of God exhibited in the works of creation, into the false representations made of him in their superstitious idolatries. Thus departing from the true God, and receiving false gods in his place, they worshipped the creature more than, or above, the Creator. They pretended, indeed, that they did not forsake the Creator, while they served numerous divinities. They acknowledged that these were inferior to the sovereign God, whom they called the Father of gods and men. But whenever religious worship is offered to the creature in any manner whatever, it is forsaking God, whose will it is not only that his creatures should serve him, but that they should serve him alone, on which account he calls himself a jealous God. The idolatry of the pagans was in reality, according to the view here given by the Apostle, a total abandonment of the worship of God.

*Who is blessed for ever. Amen.*—This expression is here used by the Apostle for the purpose of inflicting a greater stigma upon idolatry, denoting that we ought to honour and adore God alone, and are not permitted to take away from him even the smallest ray of his glory. It is an

expression that was almost in perpetual use among the Jews, and is still frequently found in their writings when they speak of God. It denotes that we should never speak of God but with profound respect, and that this respect ought to be accompanied with praise and thanksgiving. In particular, it condemns idolatry, and signifies that God alone is worthy to be eternally served and adored. The word "Amen" is here not only an affirmation, or an approval; it is also an aspiration of pious feeling, and a token of regard for the honour of God.

*V. 26.—For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature:*

*V. 27.—And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men, working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was meet.*

The Apostle having awfully depicted the magnitude of pagan wickedness, and having shown that their ungodliness in abandoning the worship of the true God was the reason why they had been abandoned to their lusts, here descends into particulars, for the purpose of showing to what horrible excesses God had permitted them to proceed. This was necessary, to prove how odious in the sight of God is the crime of idolatry. Its recompense was this fearful abandonment. It was also necessary,



in order to give a just idea of human corruption, as evinced in its monstrous enormities when allowed to take its course, and also in order to exhibit to believers a living proof of the depth of the evil from which God had delivered them; and, finally, to prove the falsity of the pagan religion, since, so far from preventing such excesses, it even incited and conducted men to their commission.

*Receiving in themselves that recompense.*—As the impiety of the pagans respecting God reached even to madness, it was also just that God should permit their corruption to recoil upon themselves, and proceed also to madness. It was just that they who had done what they could to cover the Godhead with reproaches, should likewise cover themselves with infamy, and thus receive a proportionate and retributive recompense.

*V. 28.—And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient.*

The Apostle shows here how justly the pagan idolaters were abandoned, since they had so far departed from the right knowledge of God. In the 18th verse, he had declared that the wrath of God was revealed against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men. He had now conclusively established the first charge of *ungodliness*

against the Gentiles; he next proceeds to demonstrate their *unrighteousness*.

*And as they did not like, &c.*—This is not quite literal, yet it seems the best phrase that can be used to convey the spirit of the original. The word in the Greek signifies to prove or approve. They did not approve of retaining God in their knowledge. But this cannot mean that their approbation respected their conscience, dark as it was. They did not approve, because, as the common translation well expresses it, they did not like. There is no just ground to conclude with Dr. Macknight that there is here a reference to the magistrates and lawgivers, who did not approve of giving the knowledge of God to the people. It applies to them all; neither the lawgivers, nor the people, liked to hold in remembrance a God of holiness and justice.

*To retain God in their knowledge.*—The common translation has here substantially given the spirit of the original, and is better than “holding God with acknowledgment,” as rendered by Dr Macknight. The heathens are thus said to have known God, but knowing him, they did not wish to retain that knowledge. This is a crime in the sight of God which subjects men to the most awful judgments of his justice, for it is on this account that the Apostle adds, that God also gave them up to a *reprobate mind*.

This pointedly refers to the word applied to them, as not approving the retaining of the knowledge of God. It denotes a mind judicially blinded, so as not to discern the difference between things distinguished even by the lights of nature. Thus the dark eclipse of their understanding, concerning divine things, which they had despised and rejected, had been followed by another general eclipse, respecting things human, to which they had applied themselves, and in this consisted the proportion which God observed in their punishment. They did not act according to right reason and judgment towards God; this is their crime: they did not act according to it among themselves in society; this was the effect of the abandonment of God, and was their punishment. This passage clearly shows that all that remains of moral uprightness among men, is from God, who restrains and sets bounds to the force of their perversity.

*Not convenient.*—This is a very just and literal translation, according to the meaning of the word convenient in an early stage of the history of our language; but it does not, at present, give the exact idea. The original word signifies what is suitable to the nature of man as a rational and moral being. To do these things that are not convenient, is a figurative expression denoting the doing of things that are directly con-

trary and opposite, namely, to the light of reason, the reflections of prudence, and the dictates of conscience.

*V. 29.—Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, deceit, malignity; whisperers.*

*Being filled.*—This signifies that the vices here exposed, were not tempered with virtues, but were alone and uncontrolled, occupying the mind and heart even to overflowing. *Unrighteousness.*—When this word in the original is taken in a limited sense, it signifies injustice. It is often used for iniquity in general, as in the 18th verse. Some understand it here in the latter sense, as a general word which includes all the different particulars that follow. There is no reason, however, why we should not understand it as one species of the evils which are here enumerated, and confine it to its specific meaning, viz. injustice. This was the public crime of the Romans, who built their empire on usurpation and rapine. *Fornication.*—Cicero speaks of fornication, as unblameable, as a thing universally allowed and practised, which he had never heard was condemned, either in ancient or modern times. Here it includes all the violations of the Seventh Commandment, and is not to be confined to the distinctive idea which the term bears in our language. *Wicked-*

*ness*.—This refers to the general inclination to evil that reigned among the heathens, and made them practice and take pleasure in vicious and unprofitable actions. *Covetousness*.—The original word strictly signifies taking the advantage, overreaching in a bargain, having more than what is just in any transaction with our neighbour. Of this, covetousness is the motive. This was universal among rich and poor, and was the spring of all their actions. *Maliciousness* denotes a disposition to injury and revenge. *Full of envy*.—Tacitus remarks, that this was the usual vice of the villages, towns, and cities. *Murder* was familiar to them, especially with respect to their slaves, whom they caused to be put to death for the slightest offences. *Debate*, strife about words for vain glory, and not truth. *Deceit* was common to them all, and exemplified in their conduct and conversation, as is said, chap. iii. 13. *Malignity*.—Though the word in the original, when resolved into its component parts, literally signifies bad custom or disposition, yet it generally signifies something more specific, and is with sufficient propriety rendered malignity, which is a desire to hurt others without any other reason than that of doing evil to them, and finding pleasure in their sufferings. The definition of the term, as quoted from Aristotle by Dr Macknight, seems true rather as a

specification than as a definition. It "is a disposition," he says, "to take every thing in the worse sense." No doubt, malevolence is inclined to this, but this is only one mode of discovering itself. *Whisperers*.—Dr Macknight errs in saying that the original word signifies "those who secretly speak evil of persons when they are present." The word does not import that the speaker whispers, lest the person against whom he speaks, being present, should hear. The person spoken against may as well be absent. It refers to that sort of evil speaking which is communicated in secret, and not spoken in society. It is called whispering, not from the tone of the voice, but from the secrecy. It is common to speak of a thing being whispered, not from being communicated in a low voice, but from being privately spoken to individuals. It describes them as sowers of division. It is one of the most frequent and injurious methods of calumny, because on the one hand the whisperer escapes conviction of falsehood, and on the other the accused has no means of repelling the secret calumny.

V. 30.—*Backbiters, haters of God, spiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents.*

*Backbiters*.—The original word is here improperly translated backbiters. Dr Macknight equally misses the meaning of this term, which

he translates, "revilers," distinguishing it from whisperers, or "persons who speak evil of others to their face," giving them opprobrious language and bad names. The word indeed includes such persons; but it applies to evil speaking in general; to those, in short, who take a pleasure in scandalizing their neighbours, without any reference to the presence or absence of those who are spoken against; and it by no means designates, as he says, the giving of "opprobrious language and bad names." Such persons are included in it, but not designated by it. Whisperers or tattlers are evil speakers, without any peculiar distinction. Our translators have erred in rendering it *backbiters*. As Dr Macknight has no authority to limit the word to what is spoken face to face, it is equally unwarrantable to confine it to what is spoken in the absence of those who are spoken against. The word translated "whisperers," refers, according to Professor Tholuck, to a *secret*, and the word translated "backbiters," to an open slander. Secrecy is undoubtedly the characteristic of the first word, but the last is not distinguished from it by contrast, as implying publicity; on the contrary, the former class is included in the latter, though here specifically marked. Besides, though the communication of both the classes referred to may usually be

slander, yet it appears that the signification is more extensive. Whisperers, as speakers of evil, may be guilty when they speak nothing but truth. Professor Stuart has here followed Professor Tholuck. The former he makes a slander *in secret*, the latter a slander in public. It is not necessary that all such persons should be slanderers, and the evil speaking of the latter may be in private as well as in public.

*Haters of God.*—There is no occasion, with Professor Tholuck, to seek a reference here to “those heathen mentioned by Cyprian, who, whenever a calamity befell them, used to cast the blame of it upon God, and denied a providence.” Nor is it necessary to suppose, with him, that the propriety of the charge is to be found in the fact, that superstition begets a hatred of the gods. The charge is applicable to the whole heathen world, who hated God, and therefore did not like to keep him in remembrance. This was manifest throughout the world in the early introduction of polytheism and idolatry. No other cause can be assigned for the nations losing the knowledge of the true God. They did not like to retain him in their knowledge. Had men loved God, he would have been known to them in all ages and all countries. Did not mankind receive a sufficient lesson from the Flood? Yet such was their natural enmity to God, that they were



not restrained even by that awful manifestation of Divine displeasure at forgetfulness of the Almighty. Although no one will acknowledge this charge to be applicable to himself, yet it is one which the Spirit of God, looking deeply into human nature, and penetrating the various disguises it assumes, brings home to all men in their natural state. "The carnal mind is enmity against God." They hate his holiness, his justice, his sovereignty, and even his mercy. The charge here advanced by the Apostle against the heathens was remarkably verified, when Christianity, on its first appearance among them, was violently opposed by the philosophers and the whole body of the people, rich and poor, learned and unlearned. This melancholy fact is written in the history of the persecutions of the early Christians in characters of blood. *Despiteful*.—This term does not express the meaning of the original. Archbishop Newcome translates it injurious; but though this is one of the ideas contained in the word, it is essentially deficient. It signifies injury accompanied with contumely; insolence, implying insult. It always implies contempt, and usually reproach. Often, treatment violent and insulting. Professor Stuart translates it "*reproachful, i. e.*" he says, "lacerating others by slanderous, abusive, passionate declarations." But this does not come up to the

meaning of the original. All this might be done without affecting to despise the object, or in any point of view to assume superiority over him—an idea always implied in the original word. Besides, the reproachful words may not be slanderous. Professor Tholuck makes it pride towards a fellow-creature; but this designation is not sufficiently peculiar. A proud man may not insult others. This vice aims at attaching disgrace to its object; even in the injuries it commits on the body, it designs chiefly to wound the mind. It well applies to hootings, hissings, and peltings of a mob, in which, even when the most dignified persons are the objects of attack, there is some mixture of contempt.

*Proud.*—This word translates the original correctly, as it refers to the feeling generally, and not to any particular mode of it, which is implied in arrogance, insolence, haughtiness, to persons puffed up with a high opinion of themselves, and regarding others with contempt, as if they were unworthy of any intercourse with them. *Boasters.*—The term in the original designates ostentatious persons in general; but as these usually affect more than belongs to them, it generally applies to persons who extend their pretensions to consideration beyond their just claims. *Inventors of evil things.*—Dr Macknight translates this inventors of unlawful pleasures,

and no doubt such inventions are referred to, but there is no reason to restrain it to the invention of pleasures when there are many other evil inventions. In such a case it is proper to give the expression the utmost latitude it will admit, as including all evils. *Disobedient to parents.*—Obedience to parents is here considered as a duty taught by the light of nature, the breach of which condemns the heathens, who had not the Fifth Commandment written in words. It is a part of the law originally written on the heart, the traces of which are still to be found in the natural love that children have to their parents. When the heathens then, disregarded this duty, they departed from the original constitution of their nature, and disregarded the voice of God in their hearts.

*V. 31.—Without understanding, covenant breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful.*

*Without understanding.*—This well expresses the original, for although the persons so described were not destitute of understanding as to the things of this world, but as to these might be the most intelligent and enlightened, yet in a moral sense, or as respects the things of God, they were unintelligent and stupid. This agrees with the usual signification of the word, and it perfectly coincides with universal experience.

All men are by nature undiscerning as to the things of God, and to this there never was an exception. Dr Macknight entirely misses the meaning when he explains it as signifying persons who are "imprudent in the management of affairs." The translation of Professor Stuart, "inconsiderate," is equally erroneous. Professor Tholuck well explains it "as signifying stupid about things divine." *Covenant breakers*.—This is a correct translation, if covenant is understood to apply to every agreement or bargain referring to the common business of life, as well as solemn and important contracts between nations and individuals. *Without natural affection*.—There is no occasion to seek for some particular reference in this, which has evidently its verification in very many different things. Dr Macknight supposes that the Apostle has the Stoics in his eye. Beza, and after him Professor Stuart, supposes that it refers to the exposure of children. Professor Tholuck, with more propriety, extends the term to filial and parental love. But still the reference is broader; still there are more varieties comprehended in the term. Why limit to one thing what applies to many? It gratifies ingenuity and vanity to find some peculiar reference that is not expressly stated. But instead of serving truth, it essentially injures it.

Even though one class should be peculiarly prominent in the reference, to confine it to this, robs it of its meaning.

*Implacable.*—The word in the original signifies as well persons who will not enter into league, as persons who, having entered into league, perfidiously break it. In the former sense it signifies implacable, and designates those who are peculiarly savage. In the latter sense it refers to those who violate the most sacred engagements, entered into with all the solemnities of oaths and religious rites. Our translation affixes to it the first sense. But in this sense it applies to none but the rudest and most uncivilized nations, and was not generally exemplified in the Roman Empire. It appears that it should rather be understood in the latter sense, as designating the common practice of nations in every age, who, without hesitation, violate treaties and break oaths sanctioned by every solemn obligation. The word above, rendered covenant-breakers, designates the violators of any engagement. The word employed here signifies the breaker of solemn engagements, ratified with all the solemnities of oaths and religious ceremonies.

*Unmerciful.*—There is no reason, like Dr Macknight, to confine this to those who are unmerciful to the poor. Such, no doubt, are

included ; but it extends to all who are without compassion. Persons need our compassion who are not in want ; they may be suffering in many ways. It applies to those who do not feel for the distresses of others, whatever may be the cause of their distresses ; and to those who inflict these distresses it peculiarly applies.

*V. 32.—Who, knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.*

*Knowing the judgment of God.*—Sentence or ordinance of God. This the heathens knew from the law written on the heart. Although they had almost entirely stifled in themselves the dictates of conscience, it did not cease, in some measure, to remonstrate against the unworthiness of their conduct, and to threaten the wrath of God, which it drew down upon them. They recognised it by some remains they had of right notions of the Godhead ; and by which they still understood that God was Judge of the world ; and this was confirmed to them by examples of Divine vengeance which sometimes passed before their eyes. They knew it even by the false ideas of the superstition in which they were plunged, which required them to seek for expiations. They knew it in a measure even by human laws, which awarded punishments to some of those vices of which they were guilty.

*Worthy of death.*—It is difficult to determine with certainty whether death is here to be understood literally or figuratively. Mr Stuart considers it as decided that it cannot mean literal death, because it cannot be supposed that the heathens judged every thing condemned by the Apostle to deserve capital punishment. He understands it in its figurative sense, as referring to future punishment. But an equal difficulty meets him here. Did the heathens know that God had determined to punish with death according to its figurative import—everlasting punishment? He does not take the word then in this sense to its full amount, but as meaning punishment, misery, suffering. But this is a sense which the word never bears. If it refer to future punishment, it must apply to that punishment in its full sense. That the heathens judged many of the sins here enumerated worthy of death, is clear from their ordaining death as their punishment. And the Apostle does not assert that they judged them all worthy of death, but that they judged the doers of such things worthy of death. It seems quite enough then that those things, for the commission of which they ordained death, were such as he mentions. In this sense Archbishop Newcome understands the word, “For they themselves,” he says, “punished some of their vices with death.”

*Not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.*—This is added to mark the depth of their corruption. For when men are not entirely abandoned to sin, although they approve of it in their own circumstances and practice, yet they condemn it in their general notions, and in the practice of others, because then it is not connected with their own interest and self-love. But when human corruption has arrived at its height, men not only commit sins, but approve of them in those who commit them. While this was strictly applicable to the whole body of the people, it was chargeable in the highest degree on the leaders and philosophers, who, having more light than the others, treated in their schools some of those things as crimes of which they were not only guilty themselves, but the commission of which they encouraged by their connivance, especially in the abominable rites practised in the worship of their gods.

By these conclusive proofs, Paul substantiates his charge against the whole Gentile world, first of *ungodliness*, and then of *unrighteousness* as its consequence, against which the wrath of God is revealed. It should also be observed, that as, in another place, Titus, ii. 12, he divides Christian holiness into three parts, namely, *sobriety*, *righteousness*, and *godliness*, in the same way, in this chapter, he classes pagan depravity under



three heads. The first is their *ungodliness*, namely, that they have not glorified God—that they have changed his glory into images made like to corruptible creatures—that they have changed his truth into a lie, which is opposed to godliness. The second is *intemperance*. God had delivered them up to uncleanness and vile affections, which are opposed to sobriety. The third is *unrighteousness*, and all the other vices noted in the last verses, which are opposed to righteousness.

It is impossible to add any thing to the view here given of the reign of corruption among the heathens, even the most celebrated and civilized. Nothing can be more horrible than this representation of their state; and as the picture is drawn by the Spirit of God, who is acquainted not only with the outward actions, but with the secret motives of men, no Christian can suppose that it is exaggerated. The Apostle, then, had good reason to conclude in the sequel, that justification by works is impossible, and that in no other way can it be obtained but by grace. From the whole, we see how terrible to his posterity have been the consequences of the sin of the first man; and, on the other hand, how great in the plan of redemption is the grace of God by his Son.

## CHAPTER II.

ROMANS, II. 1-29.

IN the preceding Chapter, the Apostle had described the state of the idolatrous pagans. He now passes to that of the Jews, who, while they rejected the *Righteousness of God* to which the law and the Prophets bore witness, looked for salvation from their relation to Abraham, from their exclusive privileges as a nation, and from their observance of the law. In this and the two following chapters, Paul combats these deeply rooted prejudices, and is thus furnished with an opportunity of clearly unfolding the doctrine of the gospel, and of proving that it alone is the power of God unto salvation. In the first part of this chapter, to the 24th verse, he shows that the just judgment of God must be the same against the Jews as against the Gentiles, since the Jews are equally sinners. In the second part, from the 25th verse to the end, he proves, that the external advantages

which the Jews had enjoyed, were insufficient to ward off this judgment. From his language at the beginning of this chapter, in respect to that judgment which the Jews were accustomed to pass on the other nations, and to which he reverts in the 17th verse, it is evident that through the whole of it he is addressing the Jews, and not referring, as many suppose, to the heathen philosophers or magistrates. It was not the Apostle's object to convince them in particular that they were sinners. Besides, neither the philosophers nor magistrates, nor any of the heathens, occupied themselves in judging others respecting their religious worship and ceremonies. Such observances, as well as their moral effects on those by whom they were practised, appeared to the sages of Greece and Rome a matter of perfect indifference. The Jews, on the contrary, had learned from their law, to judge, to condemn, and to abhor all other religions; to keep themselves at the greatest distance from those who professed them; and to regard all idolaters as under the wrath of God. The man, then, who *judges others*, to whom, by a figure of speech, Paul addresses his discourse in the first verse, is the same to whom he continues to speak in the rest of the chapter, and whom he names in the 17th verse, "Behold, thou art called a Jew."

V. 1.—*Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest; for wherein thou judgest another thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things.*

*Therefore.*—The connexion of this address to the Jew, is not to be taken from the last verse of the foregoing chapter, nor from what follows here, but from the whole of what had been said respecting the Gentiles from the 18th verse of the first chapter to its conclusion. The Apostle had shown the guilt of the Gentiles, who, since they had a revelation vouchsafed to them in the works of God, though they did not possess his word, were inexcusable. The Jews, therefore, who had his word, yet practised the same things for which the former were condemned, must also be inexcusable. The sequel then specifies and unfolds the charge thus generally preferred.

*O Man.*—This is a manner of address, betokening his earnestness, which Paul frequently uses, as in the ninth chapter of this Epistle.

*Whosoever thou art that judgest.*—The character of the Jews, which distinguished them from the Gentiles, was that they judged others. God had conferred on them this distinction, when he manifested his covenant to them, to the exclusion of all the other nations of the world. This character of judging, then, can belong only to the Jews, who, by a principle of their religion, condemned the other nations of the

earth, and regarded them as strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world. In this manner the Jews were seated as on a tribunal, from which they pronounced judgment on all other men. Paul, then, had good reason, for apostrophizing the Jew as *thou that judgest*. But, as there were also distinctions among the Jews themselves, and as the Priests, the Scribes, and chiefly the Pharisees, were regarded as more holy than others, he says, *whosoever thou art*,—thus not excepting even one of them.

*Thou art inexcusable*.—Paul intended to bring in all men guilty before God, as appears by what he says in the 19th verse of the third chapter, “that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.” He had already proved the inexcusableness of the Gentiles, and he here proceeds to do the same respecting the Jews, whom he addresses directly, and not in a manner only implying that he refers to them, as is supposed by Professors Tholuck and Stuart. Mr Stuart, especially, endeavours to show, that in the first part of this chapter, Paul does not proceed at once to address the Jews, “but first,” he says, “prepares the way, by illustrating and enforcing the general proposition, that all who have a knowledge of what is right, and approve of it, but

yet sin against it, are guilty." This view of the passage is equally erroneous with that of those who suppose that the Apostle is addressing the philosophers and magistrates. Both these interpretations lead away from the true meaning of the several parts of the chapter, in which the address to the Jew is direct and exclusive throughout the whole of it. The Apostle's object was to conduct men to the grace of the gospel, and so to be justified in the way of pardon and acquittance. Now, in order to this, their being convinced of sin, and of their ruined condition, was absolutely necessary, since they never would have recourse to mercy, if they did not feel compelled to confess themselves condemned. It is with this view that he here proceeds to strip the Jews, as he had done the Gentiles, of all *excuse*.

*For wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself.*—*Wherein*, that is, in the thing in which thou condemnest another, thou condemnest thyself. Dr Macknight translates it *whilst*. But, though the words in the original thus translated often in certain situations bear this signification, here this cannot be the case. When there is nothing in the context to fix the reference, the most general substantive must be chosen. There is nothing in the context to suggest the idea of time, and thing is a more

general idea. It is indeed true, that the self-condemnation of the Jew takes place at the same time with his condemnation of the Gentile; but it is so, because it is implied in the thing that takes place, and the thing that takes place is more important than the time in which it takes place. Nothing, then, is gained by thus deviating from the common version. The translation, *because that*, which is suggested by Professors Tholuck and Stuart as a possible meaning, is also to be rejected. To suggest a great variety of possible meanings has the worst tendency. Besides, the cause of the condemnation of the Jew was not his judging the Gentiles. The cause of his condemnation was his doing the things he condemned.

The reasoning of the Apostle is clear and convincing. It consists in three particulars, on which the Jew had nothing to object, namely, thou judgest another, thou doest the same thing, thou condemnest thyself, consequently thou art without excuse. *Thou judgest another.*—That is to say, thou holdest the Gentiles to be criminal and guilty before God, thou regardest them as people whom God has abandoned to themselves, and who therefore, being plunged in vice and sin of all kinds, are the objects of his just vengeance. This is what the Jew could not deny. *Thou doest the same things.*—This the Apostle was to

prove in the sequel. *Thou condemnest thyself.*—The consequence is unavoidable; for the same evidence that convicts the Gentiles in the judgment of the Jew, must, if found in him, also bring him in guilty.

*V. 2.—But we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth against them which commit such things.*

Paul proceeds here to preclude a thought that might present itself, and to stifle it, as it were, before its birth. It might be suggested that the judgment of God, that is, the sentence of condemnation with respect to transgressors, is not uniform; that he condemns some and acquits others as it pleases him, and therefore, although the Jew does the same things as the Gentiles, it does not follow that he will be held equally culpable, God having extended indulgence to the one which he has not vouchsafed to the other. The Jew, then, does not hold himself guilty when he condemns the Gentile, notwithstanding that he does the same thing. This is the odious and perverse imagination which the Apostle here repels. *We are sure*, or more literally, we know. Who knows? “Koppe,” says Mr. Tholuck, “deems that there is here an allusion to the Jews, who boasted that they alone possessed the true knowledge.” But this is palpably erroneous, because the Jews in general did not believe the thing asserted to be



known. The Apostle's object is to correct their error. Mr Tholuck himself is still farther astray when he understands it of "those apprehensions of a Divine judgment, which are spread among all mankind, to which the Apostle had alluded, v. 32." It is the Apostle himself, and those taught by the same Spirit, who knew with unfaltering assurance the thing referred to. *The judgment of God*, that is, sentence of condemnation—not, as Dr Macknight thinks, the curse of the law of Moses. The law of Moses and its curse are different from the sentence which God pronounces according to them. *According to truth, against them which commit such things.* Not *truly*, this would qualify the assertion that the judgment of God is against such persons, which, as a general truth, neither the Jew nor the Gentile is supposed to question. In this sense, *truly* would express the same as *really*. Nor does it signify according to truth, as synonymous with justice, as Mr Tholuck supposes. About the justice of the thing there is no question. If the Gentile is justly condemned for every breach of the law written on the heart, the justice of the condemnation of the transgressing Jew could not be a question. Nor, with Mr Stuart, is it to be understood as meaning agreeably to the real state of things; that is, according to the real character of the person

judged. This is doubtless a truth, but not the truth asserted in this passage. This meaning applies to the judgment that examines and distinguishes between the righteous and the wicked. But the judgment here spoken of, is the sentence of condemnation with respect to transgressors. Nor, with Dr Macknight, are we to understand this phrase, as signifying "according to the true meaning of God's covenant with the Fathers of the Jewish nation." This is not expressed in the text, nor is it suggested by the context.

The real import of this phrase will be ascertained in considering the chief error of the Jews about this matter. While they admitted that God's law in general condemns all its transgressors, yet they hoped that, as the children of Abraham, God would in their case relax the rigour of his requirements. What the Apostle asserts, then, is designed to explode this error. If God should sentence Gentiles to condemnation for transgression of the law written in the heart, and pass a different sentence on Jews transgressing the law of Moses, his judgment or sentence would not be according to truth. If some transgressors escaped, while others were punished, the truth of the threat or penalty was destroyed. The truth of God in his threatening, or in the penalty of the breach of his law, is not affected

by the escape of those saved by the Gospel. The penalty and the precept are fulfilled in Jesus Christ the Surety. While God pardons, he by no means clears the guilty. His people are absolved, because they are righteous; they have fulfilled the law, and suffered its penalty, in the death and obedience of Jesus Christ, with whom they are one. The object of the Apostle, then, was to undeceive the Jews in their vain hope of escape, while they knew themselves to be transgressors. And it equally applies to nominal Christians. It is the most prevalent ground of hope among false professors of Christianity, that God will not be so strict with them as his general threatening declares, because of their relation to him as his professed people.

*V. 3.—And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God?*

*Thinkest thou.*—This question evidently implies that the Jews did think they would escape, while they committed the very sins for which they believed the heathens would be condemned. This affords a key to the meaning of the foregoing phrase, *according to truth*, which implies the contrary of this, namely, that all will be punished according to the truth of the threatening or penalty. *Escape.*—This expression imports three things; first, that the Jew could

not avoid being judged; second, that he could not avoid being condemned; and third, that he could not prevent the execution of the sentence that God will pronounce. We may decline the jurisdiction of men, or even, when condemned by them, escape from their hands, and elude the execution of their sentence, but all must stand before the judgment-seat of Christ; all must be judged according to their works; and all who are not written in the book of life shall be cast into the lake of fire.

We may here observe how prone men are to abuse, to their own destruction, those external advantages which God bestows on them. God had separated the Jews from the Gentiles, to manifest himself unto them, and by doing so he had exalted them above the rest of the world, to whom he had not vouchsafed the same favour. The proper and legitimate use of this superiority would have been to distinguish themselves from the Gentiles by a holy life. But instead of this, owing to a fatal confidence which they placed in this advantage, they committed the same sins as the Gentiles, and plunged into the same excesses. By this means, what they considered as an advantage became a snare to them, for wherein they judged others, they condemned themselves. We may likewise remark how much self-love blinds and betrays men into false judg-

ments. When all the question was respecting the Gentiles, the Jews judged properly, conformably to divine justice; but when the question is respecting themselves, although they were equal in guilt, they would not admit that they were equally the subjects of condemnation.

*V. 4.—Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness, and forbearance, and long-suffering: not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?*

*Goodness.*—This is the best translation of the word. Mr Tholuck says, that it signifies love in general. But the idea expressed is more general than love. An object of goodness may be very unworthy of being an object of love. A distinction must be made between *goodness, forbearance, and long-suffering*. Goodness imports the benefits which God had bestowed on the Jews. Forbearance denotes God's bearing with them, without immediately executing vengeance—his delaying to punish them. It signifies the toleration which he had exercised towards them, after extending to them his goodness, so that this term implies their ingratitude after having received the benefits which God had bestowed, notwithstanding which he had continued the course of his goodness. Long-suffering signifies the extent of that forbearance during many ages, denoting a degree of patience that was not exhausted. Their sins were not immediately

visited with the Divine displeasure, as would be the case in the government of men. The term goodness respects their first calling, which was purely gratuitous. Deut. vii. 7. Forbearance respects what had passed after their calling, when, on different occasions, the people having offended God, he had notwithstanding restrained his wrath, and had not consumed them. It is this that David celebrates in Psalm ciii. 10, and cvi. Long-suffering adds something more to forbearance, for it respects a long course of ingratitude and sins on the part of that people, and imports an extreme degree of patience on the part of God, a patience which many ages, and a vast accumulation of offences, had not exhausted. The Apostle calls all this the *riches* of his goodness, and long-suffering, and forbearance, to mark the greatness of their extent, their value and abundance, and to excite admiration in beholding a God all-powerful, who has no need of any of his creatures, and is infinitely exalted above them, striving for so long a period with an unrighteous, ungrateful, a rebellious and stiff-necked people, but striving with them by his goodness and patience. This language is also introduced to correct the false judgments of men on this patience of God, for they are apt, on this account, to imagine that there is no God. If, say they, God existed, he

would not endure the wicked. They suppose that God does not exercise his providence in the government of the world, since he does not immediately punish their sins. To repress these impious thoughts, the Apostle holds forth this manner of God's procedure as the riches of goodness and patience, in order that the impunity which it appears that sinners enjoy, might not be attributed to any wrong principle.

*Or despisest thou.*—God's goodness is despised when it is not improved as a means to lead men to repentance, but on the contrary, serves to harden them, from the supposition that God entirely overlooks their sin. The Jews despised that goodness,—for the greatest contempt that can be shown to it is to shut the ear against its voice, and to continue in sin. This is acting as if it were imagined that the justice which lingers in its execution has no existence, and that it consists solely in empty threats. The interrogations of the Apostle in this and the preceding verse adds much force to his discourse. *Thinkest thou*, says he, that thou canst avoid the judgment of God? By this he marks the erroneousness and folly of such a thought. *Despisest thou* the riches of his goodness? This is added to indicate the greatness of the crime.

*Not knowing.*—There is no necessity, with Professors Tholuck and Stuart, to translate this

“not acknowledging.” The thing itself the Jews did not know, and the bulk of those called Christians are equally ignorant of it. The whole of the Old Testament was sufficiently clear on this point, but the Jews excluded the light it furnished. They did so by the presumptuous opinion they entertained of their own external righteousness, in which they made the essence of holiness to consist, imagining that it was sufficient to obtain for them acceptance with God. They also did so by the confidence they placed in the promises that God had made to Abraham and his posterity, flattering themselves with the vain thought that these acquired for them a right of impunity in their sins. And, finally, they did so, by the gross error into which they had fallen, that the sacrifices and other legal expiations were sufficient to obtain for them the pardon of their sins. By reason of these delusive prejudices they remained in their state of corruption, and did not penetrate farther into the design of God, who, by lavishing on them so much goodness, loudly called them to repentance.

*Leadeth thee to repentance.*—It has been already remarked that the Apostle said nothing like this when speaking in the first chapter respecting the Gentiles. He did not ascribe to God either goodness, or forbearance, or long-suffering in regard to them. He did not say that



God invited, or called, or led them to repentance. This shows, as has also been observed, that in the dispensation of Providence which regarded them, there was no revelation of mercy. But if there was none for the Gentiles, it was otherwise with the Jews. The Old Testament contained in substance all the promises of the gospel, as well as the temporal covenant which God had made with the Jews, which was a figure and type of the spiritual covenant that is made in Christ, and even all the rigours of the law indirectly conducted the Jews to the grace of God, and consequently called them to repentance. This call was all along accompanied among some of them by the Spirit of sanctification, as appears by the example of the prophets and others. But with respect to the greater number, it remained unaccompanied with that Spirit, and consequently continued to be merely an external calling, without any saving effect. The Apostle, in the following verse, declares that the Jews by their impenitence drew down upon themselves the just anger of God. From this it evidently follows, that God externally calls many to whom he has not purposed to give the grace of conversion. It also follows, that it cannot be said that when God thus externally calls persons to whom it is not his purpose to give grace, his object is only to render them in-

excusable. For if that were the case, the Apostle would not have spoken of the riches of his goodness, and forbearance, and long-suffering, terms which would not be applicable, if, by such a call, it was intended merely to render men inexcusable.

*V. 5.—But, after thy hardness and impenitent heart, treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God.*

The Apostle here intimates, that the contempt which the Jews had evinced of the divine calling could not remain unpunished. *Thy hardness.*—This is a figurative expression, and strongly expresses the natural obduracy and insensibility of their hearts with respect to God, as impenetrable by the strongest external force. Nothing but the power of the Spirit of God can overcome it. It is the term which Moses often employs to express the obstinacy of Pharaoh. He also employs it to mark the corruption of the Israelites, and in general the prophets use it to signify the inflexible perversity of sinners. It is in this sense that Ezekiel attributes to man a heart of stone—a heart which does not feel, and which nothing can soften. These passages, and many similar ones, denote an inclination to wickedness so strong and so rooted, that it has entire possession of the man and of all the powers of the soul, without his being able to undeceive himself, and to turn to God. It is this also which is marked by the

expression *impenitent heart*, for it does not refer merely to the act of impenitence, and to the heart being in that state at present, but to the fact of its being so enslaved to sin, that it never would or could repent. Dr Macknight, while he admits that the word literally signifies, "cannot repent," most erroneously adds, "here it signifies, which does not repent." The greatness of this obduracy was made manifest by the number and force of the external invitations which God had employed to lead the Jews to repentance, and which the Apostle calls his goodness, forbearance, and long-suffering; for these invitations refer to the frequent and earnest exhortations of his word, his temporal favours, the afflictions and the chastisements he had sent, and all his other dispensations towards the Jewish people, respecting which it is said, "What could have been done more to my vineyard that I have not done in it?" Is. v. 4; and again, "I have spread out my hands all the day unto a rebellious people." Is. lxxv. 2. When men remain inflexible under such calls, it is the indication of an awful obduracy, of a heart steeled and shut up in impenitence. Such was the state of the Jews. This passage is explicit in opposition to those who suppose that God employs nothing for men's conversion but the efficacy of his word, accompanied with other circumstances calculated to

make an impression on their minds. Without the immediate operation of the Holy Spirit, these will always prove ineffectual.

*Thou treasurest up unto thyself wrath.*—This is a strong expression, and a beautiful figure. It proves that sins will be punished according to their accumulation. A man is rich according to his treasures. The wicked will be punished according to the number and aggravation of their sins. Dr Macknight causes the whole beauty and energy of the expression to evaporate, when he explains it as comprehending the thing referred to by an Hebraistic extension of meaning. There are two treasures which Paul opposes to each other, that of goodness, of forbearance, and long-suffering, and that of wrath; and the one may be compared to the other. The one provides and amasses blessings for the creature, the other punishments. The one invites to heaven, the other precipitates to hell; the one looks on sin to pardon it on repentance, the other regards obstinate continuance to punish it, and avenge favours that are despised. God alone prepares the first; but man himself does the second, and on this account the Apostle says, “thou treasurest up unto thyself wrath.” He had just before ascribed to the Jew a hard and impenitent heart, expressions which, as we have seen, signify an entire and settled inclination to

evil, a corruption which nothing in man can overcome. He adds, that by this means he treasures up wrath. This is very far then from countenancing the opinion of those who say, that if men were absolutely and entirely unable to convert themselves, they would be excusable, and that God could not justly require of them repentance. Such is not the doctrine of the Apostle Paul, which, on the contrary, teaches that the more a man is hardened in crime, the more he becomes an object of divine justice and wrath. The reason is, that this want of power has its seat in the will itself, and in the heart, and that it consists, in an extreme degree, of wickedness and perversity, for which there can be no excuse.

*Against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God.*—That is, the day of the last judgment, which is called the day of wrath, because then the wrath of God will display itself upon the wicked without measure. Till then the sins of men are treasured up as in a heap, and punishment is awaiting them in the stores of justice. But on that day, the coming of which is plainly declared in the Scriptures, but which will then be actually *revealed*, a deluge of wrath will fall on the wicked. It is called the day of *the righteous judgment of God*, namely, of the display of his strict justice, for

judgment will then be laid to the plummet, and the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters shall overflow the hiding-place. It will, therefore, be the day of the execution of the justice of God, for it is in its execution that it will be fully made manifest.

When the Apostle speaks here of the day of wrath and of God's righteous judgment, he refers to the judgment of those who are under the law. There is no judgment of God which is not according to strict justice; there is none that, properly speaking, is a judgment of mercy. Mercy and justice are irreconcilable except in Christ, in whom strict justice is satisfied, without mercy mixing with justice. There is no judgment that admits repentance and amendment of life as conformable to justice. Repentance and amendment are not judged to stand in the room of righteousness. It is a truth to which there is no exception, either with respect to God or man, that righteous judgment admits no mercy. The acquittance of the believer in that day will be as just as the condemnation of the sinner. But the judgment to which the Apostle here refers, which he characterises as the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, is that of the execution of unmingled wrath upon the wicked. He is not speaking of believers who are in Christ, but of

those who are *under the law*, before which nothing but perfect and personal conformity to all its demands can subsist; "for as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them." All the sins of such persons will be punished, but especially those of obstinacy and contempt which shall have been shown towards the goodness and patience of God; for what the Apostle is here aiming at, is to convince the Jews that it is to that judgment those will be remitted who reject the grace that has been manifested to them.

*V. 6.—Who will render to every man according to his deeds.*

God, as the sovereign judge of men, receives from them their good and bad actions. These he takes from their hands, so to speak, such as they are, and places them to their account, whether they are to his glory or dishonour. Sinners do not calculate upon this righteous procedure. They commit sin without thinking of God, and without considering that he remembers all their actions. There is, however, an invisible hand which is treasuring up all that a man thinks, all that he says, and all that he does; not the least part is lost; all is laid up in the treasury of justice. Then, after he has thus received all, he will also restore all; he will

cause to descend again upon men what they have made to ascend to him. *To every man.*—The judgment will be particular to every individual; every one will have to answer for himself. This judgment of those who are under the law will not receive either an imputation of good or of bad works of one to another, as the judgment of those who are under grace receives for them the merits of Jesus Christ; but every one of the former shall answer for his own proper works.

*According to his deeds.*—That is to say, either according to his righteousness, if any were found in himself righteous, which will not be the case, for all men are sinners, but it will be according to the judgment to require righteousness; or it will be according to his sins; in one word, according as every one shall be found either righteous or unrighteous. This signifies also that there will be a diversity of punishment, according to the number or greatness of the sins of each individual, not only as to the nature, but also the degree of their works, good or bad, for the punishment of all will not be equal. Matt. xi. 22, 24. Luke, xii. 47, 48. There will not, however, as the Pharisees imagined, and as many nominal Christians suppose, be two accounts for each person, the one of his good works, the other of his sins, the judgment being



favourable or unfavourable to him, according as the one or the other predominates; for there will be no balancing of this sort. "According to his deeds" means, that in the judgment God will have no regard either to descent or to birth, either to the dignity or quality of the person, or whether he were Jew or Gentile, as to the privileges he enjoyed, or any such thing, which might counteract justice, or turn it from its course, but that it will regard solely the works of each individual; and their deeds comprehend every thing that is either obedience or disobedience to the law of God. The judgment of the great day will be to all men according to their works. The works of those who shall be condemned will be the evidence that they are wicked. The works of believers will not be appealed to as the cause of their acquittal, but as the evidence of their union with Christ, on account of which they will be pronounced *righteous*, for in them the law has been fulfilled in their Divine Surety.

*V. 7.—To them who, by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory, and honour, and immortality, eternal life.*

*Patient continuance in well-doing.*—This well expresses the sense of the original. It signifies perseverance in something arduous. It is not mere continuance, but continuance in doing or suffering something that tries patience. The

word is used to signify perseverance, patience, endurance—a perseverance with resistance to all contrary effects, namely, to all temptations, to all snares, to all persecutions, and, in general, to all that could discourage or divert from it, in however small a degree. It is not meant that any man can produce such a perseverance in good works, for there is only one, Jesus Christ, who can glory in having wrought out a perfect righteousness. He alone is holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners. But here the Apostle only declares what the Divine judgment will demand according to the law, to which the Jews were adhering for justification before God, and rejecting that righteousness which he has provided in the gospel. He marks what the law will require for the justification of man, in order to conclude from it, as he does in the sequel, that none can be justified in this way, because all are guilty. This shows how ignorantly the Church of Rome seeks from this passage to establish a proof of the merit of works, and of justification by works, since it teaches a doctrine the very contrary; for all that the Apostle says in this chapter is intended to show the necessity of another mode of justification than that of the law, namely, by grace, which the gospel sets before us through faith in Jesus Christ, according to which God pardons

sins, as the Apostle afterwards shows in the third chapter. To pretend, then, to establish justification by works, and the merit of works, by what is said here, is directly to oppose the meaning and reasoning of the Apostle.

*Seek for glory, and honour, and immortality.*—Glory signifies a state brilliant and illustrious, and honour the approbation and praise of God, which, with immortality, designate the blessings of eternal life. These God would, without doubt, confer in consequence of perseverance in good works, but which cannot be obtained by the law. Here we see a condemnation of that opinion which teaches, that a man should have no motive in what he does in the service of God but the love of God. The love of God, indeed, must be the paramount motive, and without it no action is morally good. But it is not the only motive. The Scriptures every where address men's hopes and fears, and avail themselves of every motive that has a tendency to influence the human heart. The principles of human nature have God for their author, and are all originally right. Sin has given them a wrong direction. Of the expressions glory and honour, Dr Macknight gives the following explanations:—“Glory is the good fame which commonly attends virtuous actions, but honour is the respect paid to the virtuous person himself

by those who have intercourse with him." According to this interpretation, they who are seeking for immortality and eternal life are seeking for the favour and respect of men.

*Eternal life.*—The Apostle does not say that God will render salvation, but "eternal life." The truth declared in this verse, and in those that follow, is the same as that exhibited by our Lord when the rich young man asked him, "What good thing shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?" His reply was, "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments," Matth. xix. 16; and when the lawyer, tempting him, said, "Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" Jesus answered, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind, and thy neighbour as thyself," Luke, x. 25. The verse before us, then, which declares that eternal life shall be awarded to those who seek it by *patient continuance in well doing*, and who, according to the tenth verse, *work good*, both of which announce the full demand of the law, are of the same import with the thirteenth verse, which affirms that *the doers of the law shall be justified*. In all these verses the Apostle is referring to the law, and not, as it is generally understood, to the gospel. It would have been obviously calculated to mislead the Jews, with

whom Paul was reasoning, to set before them in this place personal obedience as the way to eternal life, which, in connexion with what he had said on repentance, would tend directly to lead them to mistake his meaning on that subject. But besides this, if these verses refer to the gospel, they break in upon and disturb the whole train of his reasoning, from the 18th verse of the first chapter to the 20th of the third, where he arrives at his conclusion, that, by the deeds of the law, there shall no flesh be justified in the sight of God. Paul was afterwards to declare the way of salvation, as he does, ch. iii. 21, 26, immediately after he drew the above conclusion; but till then, his object was to exhibit, both to Jews and Gentiles, the impossibility of obtaining justification by any thing they could do themselves, and by convincing them of this, to lead them to the grace of the gospel. In conversing with the late Mr Robert Hall at Leicester, respecting the Epistle to the Romans, he remarked to me, that this passage had always greatly perplexed him, as it seemed to be not only aside from, but even opposed to what appeared, from the whole context, to be the drift of the Apostle; and I believe, that every one who supposes that the Apostle is here referring to the gospel, will experience a similar difficulty.

I know that the view here given of these verses is contrary to that of almost all the English commentaries on this epistle. I have consulted a great number of them, besides those of Calvin, and Beza, and Marez, and the Dutch annotations, and that of Quesnel, all of which, with one voice, explain the 7th and 10th verses of this chapter as referring to the gospel. The only exception that I am aware of among the English commentaries is that of Mr Fry, who, in his exposition of the 16th verse, remarks as follows:—"He (the Apostle) introduces this statement of the certainty of a judgment to come, of the universal guilt and inevitable condemnation of mankind in the course of justice, in order to show the universal necessity of a Saviour, and of that righteousness which was of God by faith. And it seems altogether extraordinary, that some expositors should conceive the above account of the last judgment to include a description of the Redeemer's bestowing the reward of the inheritance upon his people, and that of such the Apostle speaks when he says, 'To them that, by patient continuance in well-doing, seek glory, honour, and immortality, eternal life;' 'Glory, honour, and peace, to every one that doeth good.' For, most assuredly, this is not the language of the righteousness of faith, but the exact manner of speaking

which the Apostle ascribes to the righteousness of the law." To the same purpose, Mr Marshall, in his work on "the Gospel Mystery of Sanctification," 14th ed. p. 94, observes, "They grossly pervert these words of Paul, 'Who will render to every man according to his deeds; to them who by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory, and honour, and immortality—eternal life;' where they will have Paul to be declaring the terms of the gospel, when he is evidently declaring the terms of the law, to prove that both Jews and Gentiles are all under sin, and that no flesh can be justified by the work of the law, as appeareth by the tenor of the following discourse."

I have noticed that from this passage the Church of Rome endeavours to establish the merit of works, and of justification by means of works. Accordingly, Quesnel, a Roman Catholic, in expounding the 6th verse, exclaims, "*Merites veritables; necessité des bonnes œuvres. Ce sont nos actions bonnes ou mauvaises qui rendent doux ou severe le jugement de Dieu!*" "Real merits; necessity of good works. They are our good or bad actions which render the judgment of God mild or severe!" And indeed, were the usual interpretation of this and the following verse the just one, it must be confessed that this Romanist would have some ground for his tri-

umph. But if we take the words in their plain and obvious import, and understand the Apostle in this place as announcing the terms of the law, in order to prove to the Jews the necessity of having recourse to grace, and of yielding to the goodness and forbearance of God, leading them to repentance, while he assures them that not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified; then the whole train of his discourse is clear and consistent. On the other supposition it appears confused and self-contradictory, and calculated not merely to perplex, but positively to mislead, and to strengthen the prejudices of those who were going about to establish their own righteousness. For in whatever way these expressions may, with certain explanations and qualifications, be interpreted in an evangelical sense, yet unquestionably, as taken by themselves, and especially in the connexion in which they stand in this place, they present the same meaning as is announced in the 13th verse, where the Apostle declares, that *the doers of the law* shall be justified.

V. 8.—*But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation, and wrath.*

Paul here describes the wicked by three characters. The first character is that they are *contentious*; that is, rebellious, and murmurers



against the Divine laws, quarrellers with God, and indicating their natural enmity against God by disapproving of his government or authority. The second is *rebels against the truth*; that is to say, in revolt and at open war against what is true and right according to the Divine will, as opposed to unrighteousness, which God abhors. The third is *obedient to unrighteousness*; that is, revolting against what is good, and becoming slaves to what is evil. Here a striking contrast is indicated between that contentious spirit which disobeys the truth, and yet obeys unrighteousness. The one denotes an extraordinary haughtiness, and an exceeding degree of boldness, and the other extreme meanness and servility of soul. They who do not choose to serve God as their legitimate sovereign become the slaves of a master who is a tyrant and a usurper.

*Indignation and wrath.*—These two terms united, mark the greatness of the wrath of God, proportioned to the dignity of the Sovereign Judge of the world, to the dignity of those eternal laws which have been violated, to the majesty of the legislator by whom they have been promulgated, to the favours which sinners have received from him, and proportioned also to the unworthiness and meanness of the creature compared with God. Although, when human passions are ascribed to God, we must not suppose

that he is affected as we are; yet the expressions employed here, show that God will certainly punish the wicked. The Scriptures represent God in the character of a just Judge, as well as of a merciful Father. The flattering doctrine that insinuates the hope of the final universal happiness of transgressors, both of devils and men, is altogether without countenance from Scripture. The word of God contains the most awful denunciations of the Divine wrath. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. Yet some writers lead sinners to hope that the character of God will secure them from punishment.

*V. 9.—Tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man that doeth evil: of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile.*

*Tribulation and anguish.*—These two terms denote the punishment, as the indignation and wrath designate the principle on which the condemnation proceeds. They also designate the greatness of the punishment. *Upon every soul of man.*—This universality is intended to point to the vain expectations of the Jews that they would be exempt from that punishment, and assists in determining the import of the phrase “according to truth,” in verse 2. It signifies too, the whole man, for it must not be imagined that the wicked do not also suffer in their body. Jesus Christ says expressly, that they shall

come forth unto the resurrection of damnation. This refutes the opinion of Socinian heretics and others, who insist that the punishment of the wicked will consist in an entire annihilation both of body and soul. The terms "tribulation and anguish," signify a pain of sensation, and consequently suppose the subsistence of the subject.

*That doeth evil.*—The word in the original designates evil workers, as persons who practise wickedness habitually. The connexion of punishment with sin is according to the order of divine justice; for it is just, that those who have offended infinite majesty should receive the retribution of their wickedness. It is likewise according to the denunciation of the law, whether it is viewed as given externally by the word, or as engraven internally in the conscience of every man, for it threatens punishment to transgressors. *Of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile* (literally Greek).—In this place, "the Jew first" must mean the Jew principally, and implies that the Jew is more accountable than the Gentile, and will be punished according to his superior light; for as the Jew will have received more than the Gentile, he will also be held more culpable before the divine tribunal, and will consequently be more severely punished. His privileges will aggravate his culpability, and

increase his punishment. "You only have I known of all the families of the earth; therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities," Amos, iii. 2; Matth. xi. 22; Luke, xii. 47. But although the judgment will begin with the Jew, and on him be more heavily executed, it will not terminate with him, but will be also extended to the Gentile who will be found guilty, though not with the same aggravation.

*V. 10.—But glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good; to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile.*

*Glory, honour, and peace.*—Glory, as has already been observed, refers to the state of blessedness to which those who should inherit eternal life would be admitted; honour, to the praise and approbation of God, to which is here added *peace*. Peace is a state of confirmed joy and prosperity. As added to glory and honour, it may appear feeble as a climax, but in reality it has all the value that is here ascribed to it. No blessing can be enjoyed without it. What would glory and honour be without peace? What would they be if there was a possibility of falling from the high dignity, or of being afterwards miserable?

*To every man that worketh good.*—Happiness, by the established order of things, is here asserted to be the inseparable consequence of righteousness, so that virtue should never be

unfruitful; and he who had performed what is his duty, if any such could be found, should enjoy rest and satisfaction. This is also according to the declaration of the Divine law; for if, on the one hand, it threatens transgressors, on the other, it promises good to those who observe it. "The man that doeth them shall live in them;" Gal. iii. 12. Since, then, no righteous man could be disappointed of the fruit of his righteousness, it may, in consequence, be asked, if any creature who had performed his duty exactly would merit any thing from God? To this it is replied, that the infinite majesty of God, which admits of no proportion between himself and the creature, absolutely excludes all idea of merit. For God can never be laid under any obligation to his creature, and the creature, who is nothing in comparison of him, and who, besides, has nothing but what God has given him, can never acquire any claim on his Creator. Whenever God makes a covenant with man, and promises any thing, this promise indeed engages God on his part, on the ground of his truth and faithfulness; but it does not so engage him as to give us any claim of merit upon him. "Who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again;" Rom. xi. 35. Thus, in whatever manner we view it, properly speaking there can be no merit in men; whence it follows, that

happiness would not be conferred as a matter of right on a man who should be found innocent. It must be said, however, that it would be given by a right of judgment, by which the order and proportion of things is preserved, the majesty of the law of God maintained, and the Divine promises accomplished. But, in awarding life and salvation to him who has the righteousness of Christ imputed to him, God is both faithful and just, on account of the infinite merit of his Son. *To the Jew first, and also to the Greek.*—When glory and honour are promised to the Jew first, it implies that he had walked according to his superior advantages, and of course would be rewarded in proportion; while the Gentile, in his degree, would not be excluded.

*V. 11.—For there is no respect of persons with God.*

Whatever difference of order there may be between the Jew and the Gentile, that difference does not change the foundation and substance of the judgment. To have respect to the appearance of persons, or to accept of persons, is the vice of an iniquitous judge, who in some way violates justice; but the divine judgment cannot commit such a fault. Besides we must never lose sight of the train of the Apostle's reasoning. His design is to show that the Jews, being, as they really are, sinners equally with the

Gentiles are involved with them in the same condemnation. This is what he proves by the nature of the Divine judgment, *which is according to truth*, that is, which is perfectly just, v. 2; which *renders to every man according to his deeds*, v. 6; and which *has no respect of persons*, v. 11; and, consequently, it will be equal to the Jew and the Gentile, so that neither the one nor the other can defend himself against its sentence.

The declaration, that God has no respect of persons, is frequently quoted as militating against the doctrine of election; but it has no bearing on the subject. It relates to men's character, and God's judgment according to character. Every man will be judged according to his works. This, however, does not say that God may not choose some eternally to life, and give them faith and good works, according to which, as evidences that they belong to Christ, they shall be judged. God's sovereign love to the elect is manifested in a way that not only shows him to be just in their justification, but also true to his declaration with respect to the future judgment. The assertion of the Apostle in this place is a truth of great importance, not only with respect to the Jews, but also with respect to the professors of Christianity, many of whom fancy that there is a sort of favouritism

in the judgment of God, that will overlook in some what is in others accounted condemnatory.

*V. 12.—For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law; and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law.*

Here Paul explains the equality of the judgment, both with respect to the Gentiles and the Jews. *Without law*, that is, the written law, for none are without law, as the Apostle immediately afterwards shows. The Gentiles have not received the written law; they have, however, sinned, and they shall perish, that is to say, be condemned without that law. The Jews have received the written law; they have also sinned, they will be judged, that is to say, condemned by that law; for, in the next verse, Paul declares, that only the *doers* of the law shall be justified; and, consequently, as condemnation stands opposed to justification, they who are not doers of it will be condemned. In one word, the Divine justice will only regard the sins of men; and wherever these are found it will condemn the sinner. The Gentiles shall perish without law. They will perish, though they are not to be judged by the written law. It is alleged by some, that although the Apostle's language shows that all the Gentiles are guilty before God, yet it does not imply that they will be condemned; for that they may be guilty, yet



be saved by mercy through Jesus Christ. But let it be observed, that the language of the Apostle entirely precludes the possibility of such a supposition. It is not said that they who have sinned without law are guilty without law, but that they shall "*perish without law.*" The language, then, does not merely assert their guilt, but clearly asserts their condemnation. They shall perish. No criticism can make this expression consistent with the salvation of the Gentiles who know not God. They will be condemned by the law written on their hearts. Many are inclined to think that the condemnation of the heathen is peculiarly hard; but it is equally just, and not more severe than the punishment of those who have sinned against revelation. They will not be judged by the light which they had not, nor punished so severely as they who resisted that light.\*

V. 13.—(*For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified.*)

This verse, with the two following, forms a parenthesis between the 12th and 16th, explanatory of the two propositions contained in the 12th. Some also include the 11th and 12th in the parenthesis. If this mode of punctuation were adopted, the 13th, 14th, and 15th verses

\* On the state of the heathen world destitute of the Gospel, see the Author's "Evidences," vol. ii. pp. 427, 456.

would be a parenthesis within a parenthesis ; but for this there appears to be no occasion, as the 11th and 12th verses connect with the 10th, and also with the 16th. *For not the hearers of the law.*—Against what the Apostle had just said concerning the equality of the judgment, two objections might be urged, the one in favour of the Gentiles, the other in favour of the Jews. The first is, that since God has not given his law to the Gentiles, there can be no place for their condemnation,—for how can they be condemned as transgressors if they have not received a law ? The second is contrary to the first, and is, that the Jews ought to be more leniently treated, since God, who has given them his law, has, by doing so, declared in their favour, and made them his people ; he will therefore, without doubt, have a regard for them which he has not for the others, whom he has abandoned. The Apostle obviates both these objections in this and the two following verses, and thus defends his position respecting the equality of the judgment. As for the last of them, which he answers in this verse first, he says, that it is not sufficient for justification before God to have received the law, and simply to be hearers of it ; but that it must be observed and reduced to practice. This is an incontestible truth. For the law has not been given as a matter of

curiosity or contemplation as a philosophical science, but to be obeyed; and the greatest outrage against the law and the legislator is to hear it and not to take heed to practise it. It will be in vain, therefore, for the Jew to say, I am a hearer of the law, I attend on its services, I belong to the covenant of God, who has given me his testimonies. On all these accounts, being a transgressor, as he is, he must be condemned.

*The doers of the law shall be justified.*—We must by this understand an exact obedience to the law to be intended, which can defend itself against that declaration, “Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.” For it is not the same with the judgment of the law as with that of grace. The Gospel indeed requires of us a perfect obedience to its commands, yet it not only provides for believers’ pardon of the sins committed before their calling, but of those also which they afterwards commit. But the judgment of the law admits of no indulgence to those who are under it; it demands a full and perfect personal observance of all its requirements—a patient continuance in well-doing—without the least deviation, or the smallest speck of sin, and when it does not find this state of perfection, condemns the man. But did not the law itself

contain expiations for sin, and consequently shall not the judgment which will be passed according to the law, be accompanied with grace and indulgence through the benefit of these expiations? The legal expiations had no virtue in themselves, but, inasmuch as they were figures of the expiation made by Jesus Christ they directed men to his sacrifice. But as they belonged to the temporal or carnal covenant, they neither expiated nor could expiate any but typical sins, that is to say, uncleanness of the flesh, Heb. ix. 13, which were not real sins, but only external pollutions. Thus, as far as regarded the legal sacrifices, all real sins remained on the conscience, for from these the law did not in the smallest degree discharge; whence it follows, that the judgment according to the law, to those who are under it, will be a strict judgment according to law, which pardons nothing.

*V. 14.—For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves.*

*For.*—This is the proper translation of the Greek particle, and not *therefore*, according to Dr Macknight, who entirely misunderstands both the meaning of the passage itself, and the connexion in which it stands, and founds upon it a doctrine opposed to all that is contained

on the subject, both in the Old Testament and the New. This verse has no connexion with or dependence whatever on the foregoing, as is generally supposed, but connects with the first clause of verse 12, which it explains. Together with the following verse, it contains the answer to the objection that might be made to what is contained in the beginning of that verse, namely, that God cannot justly condemn the Gentiles, since he has not given them a law. To this the Apostle here replies, that, though they have not an external and verbal law, as that which God gave to the Israelites, they have, however, the law of the conscience, which is fully sufficient to establish the justice of their condemnation. This is the meaning of that proposition, *having not a law, are a law unto themselves*, and of that other, *which show the work of the law written in their hearts*; by which he establishes the justice of what he had said in the 12th verse, that *as many as have sinned without law, shall perish without law*. He proves it in two ways; 1st, Because they do naturally the things that the law requires, which shows that they have a law in themselves, since they sometimes act according to it. 2d, He proves it by their not being devoid of a conscience, since, according to its decisions, they accuse or excuse one another.

They who *have not a law*,—that is, the written law,—*do by nature the things contained in the law*. It could not be the Apostle's intention to assert, that the heathens in general, or that any one of them, kept the law written in the heart, when the contrary had been proved in the preceding chapter; but they did certain things, though imperfectly, commanded by the law, which proved that they had, by their original constitution, a discernment of the difference between right and wrong. They did nothing, however, in the *manner* which the law required, that is, from the only motive that makes an action good, namely, obedience and love to God. God governs the world in this way. He rules the actions of men and beasts by the instincts and affections which he has implanted in them. Whatever good, men do by nature they do by their constitution, not from respect to the authority of God. That the pagans do many things that are in action agreeable to the law of God is quite true and obvious, and should not be denied. That they do any thing acceptable to God is not true, and is not here asserted.

V. 15.—*Which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean-while accusing or else excusing one another.* )

*The work of the law.*—We have here a dis-

inction between the *law* itself, and the *work* of the law. The work of the law is the thing that the law doeth, that is, what it teaches about actions, as good or bad. The work, or business, or office of the law, is to teach what is right or wrong. This, in some measure, is done by the light of nature in the heart of every man. There remains then in all men, to a certain degree, a discernment of what the law requires, designated here the "work" of the law; the performance or neglect of which is followed by the approbation or disapprobation of the conscience. It has no relation to the authority of the lawgiver, as the principle of the law itself; but solely to the distinction between actions, as right and wrong in themselves, and the hope to escape future punishment, or of obtaining future reward. The love and the reverential fear of God, which are the true principles of obedience, have been effaced from the mind; but a degree of knowledge of his justice, and the consciousness that the violations of his law deserve and will be followed by punishment, have been retained.

*Written in their hearts.*—This is an allusion to the law that was written by the finger of God upon tables of stone, and afterwards written in the Scriptures. The great principles of this law were communicated to man in his creation,

and much of it remains with him in his fallen state. This natural light of the understanding is called the law written on the heart, because it is imprinted on the mind by the author of creation, and is God's work as much as the writing on the tables of stone. *Conscience witnessing together.*—Together with the law written on the heart. But it may be asked, are not these two things the same? They are not. They are different principles. Light, or knowledge of duty, is one thing, and conscience is another. The one shows what is right; the other approves of it, and condemns the contrary. We might suppose a being to have the knowledge of duty, without the principle that approves of it, and blames the transgression.

*Their thoughts the mean-while accusing, or else excusing between one another.*—Not alternately, nor in turn. Their reasonings, not "thoughts," condemning, or else defending. What is the object condemned or defended? Not themselves, but one another; that is, those between whom the reasonings take place. The reference evidently is to the fact, that in all places, in all ages, men are continually, in their mutual intercourse, accusing or defending human conduct. This supposes a standard of reference, a knowledge of right and wrong. No man could accuse and condemn another, if there



were not some standard of right and wrong; and no man could defend an action without a similar standard. This is obviously the meaning of the Apostle. To these ideas of right and wrong are naturally joined that of God, who is the sovereign judge of the world, and that of rewards and punishments, which will follow either good or bad actions. These ideas do not fail to present themselves to the sinner, and inspire fear and inquietude. But as, on the other hand, self-love and corruption reign in the heart, these come to his support, and strive, by vain reasonings, to defend or to extenuate the sin. The Gentiles, then, however depraved, lost, and abandoned, and however destitute of the aid of the written law, are notwithstanding, a law to themselves, having the law written in their hearts. They have still sufficient light to discern between good and evil, virtue and vice, honesty and dishonesty; and their conscience enables them sufficiently to make that distinction, whether before committing sin, or in the commission of it, or after they have committed it. Besides this, remorse, in consequence of their crimes, reminds them that there is a God, a judge before whom they must appear to render account to him of their actions. They are then a law to themselves, they have the work of the law written in their hearts.

That the knowledge of the revealed law of God has not been preserved in every nation, is, however, entirely to be attributed to human depravity; and if it was restored to one nation for the benefit of others, it must be ascribed to the goodness of God. The law of God, and the revelation respecting the Messiah, had been delivered to all men after the Flood by Noah, who was a preacher of the everlasting righteousness, 2 Peter, ii. 5, which was to be brought in to answer the demands of that law. But all the nations of the earth had lost the remembrance of it, not liking to retain God in their knowledge. God again discovered it to the Jews in that written revelation with which they were favoured. If it be asked, why was the law vouchsafed in this manner to that nation and not also to the Gentiles, Paul explains this mystery, chap. ix. It is sufficient then to say, that God has willed to make it be known, by this abandonment, how great and dreadful was the fall of the human race, and by that means one day to magnify the glory of the grace which he purposed giving to men by Jesus Christ. He willed to leave the greater part of men a prey to Satan, to show how great is his abhorrence of sin, and how great was the wrath which our disobedience had kindled against the world. But why had he not also abandoned the Jews? Because he

chose to leave some ray of hope in the world, and it pleased him to lay the foundation of redemption by his Son. But why was the greater part abandoned? Because then was the time of Divine wrath and justice, and that sin must be allowed to abound that grace might superabound. Why, in fine, choose the nation of the Jews rather than any other nation? Because, without any further reasons, it was the sovereign good pleasure of God.

V. 16.—*In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to my gospel.*

This verse is to be construed in connexion with the 12th, to the contents of which the three intermediate verses had given, in a parenthesis, the explanatory answers. *In the day when God shall judge.*—It is here assumed by the Apostle that God is the Judge of the world. This is a truth which nature and right reason teach. Intelligent creatures being capable of obedience to law, it follows necessarily that they have a judge, for the law would be null and void if it was not put in execution by a judgment; and as there is a law common to the whole human race, it must also be admitted that there is a common judge. Now this judge of all can only be God, for it is only God who possesses all the qualifications for such an office. The Apostle likewise assumes that there will be a *day* when

God will hold this judgment. This is also a truth conformable to right reason, for there must be a fixed time for rendering public the decrees of justice, otherwise it would not be duly honoured, since its honour consists in being recognised to be what it is before all creatures. If, then, there were only individual judgments, either in this life or at death, justice would not be manifested as it ought to be. Hence it follows, that there must be a public and solemn day in which God will execute judgment before the assembled universe. Besides, the Apostle here intimates that there will be an end to the duration of the world, and the succession of generations; for if there be a day appointed for a universal judgment, it follows that all men must there appear, and consequently that their number is determined, and also that the time of their calling and of their life must terminate, with respect to all of them, without a single exception, and that the succession of generations must cease.

*The secrets of men.*—It is not here meant that God will judge only their secrets, so that their public and known actions should pass without being judged; for there is nothing that God does not judge. But it is intended to show with what exactness the judgment will proceed, since it takes account of things the most secret and

the most concealed. It will not be like the judgment of men, which cannot reach the hearts and thoughts. God will not only take cognizance of external actions, but also of those that are internal, and will discover even the inmost thoughts of men. All actions then, whether open or secret, will come into judgment, but secrets or hidden things are here said to be judged, because no other judgment reaches them. If men can conceal their evil deeds, they are safe from human judgment. But not so with respect to the Judge at the great day. The most secret sins will then be manifested and punished. *By Jesus Christ.*—God will carry into effect that judgment by Jesus Christ. “He hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained,” Acts, xvii. 31. Jesus Christ will conduct the judgment, not only as it respects believers, but also the wicked. If the secrets of men are to be brought into judgment, and if Jesus Christ is to be the Judge, he must be the Searcher of hearts, Acts, i. 24, Rev. ii. 23. He must then be truly God. *According to my gospel.*—Paul calls the gospel his gospel, not that he is the author of it, for it is solely from God; but to say that of it he is the minister and herald, that it is the gospel which he preached. The gospel, in a large sense, includes every

thing revealed by Jesus Christ. The judgment then shall take place according to the declarations therein contained.

*v. 17.—Behold, thou art called a Jew, and retest in the law, and makest thy boast of God.*

Here commences the second part of this chapter, where Paul purposes to show that all the external advantages of the Jews over the Gentiles were unavailing for their protection from the just condemnation of God. In the first place, he enumerates all their privileges, on account of which the Jews could exalt themselves above the Gentiles. Afterwards he lays it to their charge that, notwithstanding all these privileges, they were sinners, equally guilty as others. Finally, he shows that, being sinners, as they all were, their advantages would avail them nothing, and would only aggravate their condemnation.

*Behold, thou are called a Jew.*—The Apostle here continues his discourse to the same persons whom, from the commencement of the chapter, he had addressed, and now calls on the Jew by name. In this verse, and the three following; Paul classes the advantages of the Jews under six particulars: 1. Their bearing the name of Jew. 2. Having received the law. 3. Having the true God as their God. 4. Knowing his will. 5. Discerning what is evil. 6. Their ability to teach and guide other men.

As to the first of these, the name, *Jew*, signifies three things:—confession, praise, and thanksgiving; and by these three things that people was distinguished from all other nations. The Jew alone had been chosen as the confessor of God, while all the rest of the world had abjured him. The Jew alone was appointed to celebrate his praises, while by others he was blasphemed. The Jew alone was appointed to render thanksgiving to God for multiplied benefits received, while others were passed by. In that name, then, in which the Jews gloried, and which distinguished them from all other nations, and implied all the privileges they enjoyed, they possessed already a signal advantage over the Gentiles.\* Dr Macknight and Mr Stuart prefer surnamed to *called*; but the name was not exactly what is called a surname. It was the name of a whole people. The word *denominated* is more appropriate, for it answers both to their name as a people and to their religion, both of which are comprised in the name Jew.

\* The name of Jew was in use before the return from the captivity, for we find it in the 32d chapter of Jeremiah. It appears, then, that it took its rise even from the time of the separation of the ten tribes, for the ten tribes retained that of Israel, and the others that of Judah; the country was called Judea, Psalm lxxvi., and the language Jewish, 2d Kings, xviii. 26, and Isaiah, xxxvi. 11–13; and afterwards the inhabitants Jews, for this name is also found in Daniel, iii. 8.

*And rested in the law.*—That is to say, thou hast no occasion to study any other wisdom or philosophy than the law. It is thy *wisdom* and thy *understanding*, Deut. iv. 6. The term *restest* signifies two things; the one that the labour was spared the Jews of employing many years and great endeavours, and travelling to other countries, as was the case with other nations, in acquiring some knowledge and certain rules of direction. The law which God had given them rendered this unnecessary, and furnished abundantly all that was required for the regulation of their conduct. The other idea which this term conveys is, that they had an entire confidence in the law as a heavenly and divine rule which could not mislead them, while the Gentiles could have no reliance on their philosophy, which deceived them.

*And makest thy boast of God.*—Namely, in having him for their God and being his people. while the Gentiles, having only false gods, were “without God in the world,” Eph. ii. 12. The Jews had the true God, the Creator and Lord of heaven and earth, for the author of their calling, for their deliverer who had performed many miracles in their favour, and for their legislator who had even spoken to them from the midst of fire, for the founder of their government, and for their king and protector. His earthly palace



was in their metropolis; he had there regulated his worship, and caused them to hear his voice. The other nations possessed nothing similar. They had therefore great reason to glory in him, and on this account David said, that in God was his strength and his refuge, Psalm, lxii. 7; Psalm, lxxxix., and Psalm, cxliv.

*V. 18.—And knowest his will, and approvest the things that are more excellent, being instructed out of the law.*

*And knowest his will.*—That is, what is agreeable to him, what he requires them to do, what he commands, what he approves, and what he rewards. The term *knowest* signifies not a confused knowledge, such as the Gentiles had by the revelation of nature, but a distinct knowledge by the revelation of the word, which the Gentiles did not possess. “He showeth his word unto Jacob, his statutes and his judgments unto Israel. He hath not dealt so with any nation: and for his judgments, they have not known them!” Psalm, cxlvii. 19. At the same time, the Apostle does not mean to say that the Jews had a practical knowledge of the will of God, for he immediately accuses them of the contrary. *And approvest things that are excellent.*—This is the fifth advantage which follows from the preceding. They knew the will of God, and by that will they knew what was contrary to it; that is to say, those things which God does not

approve, and which he condemns. For the declaration of what God approves includes, in the way of opposition and negation, those things which he does not approve. *Being instructed out of the law.*—This refers to the two preceding articles—to the knowledge of the will of God, and to the discernment of the things that are contrary to it.

V. 19.—*And art confident that thou thyself art a guide of the blind, a light of them which are in darkness.*

This is the sixth advantage depending on the preceding ones. The law not only instructed the Jews for themselves, but also for others, and in this they held that they had a great superiority over the other nations. *A guide to the blind.*—The Gentiles are here called blind, for with all the lights of their philosophy, of their laws and their arts, they were, after all, blind, since, with the exception of true religion, which they did not possess, there is no true saving light to the world. *A light of them which are in darkness.*—The Rabbis called themselves the light of the world, to which our Lord appears to refer when he gives this title to his Apostles.

V. 20.—*An instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, which hast the form of knowledge and of the truth in the law.*

*An instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes.*—These titles explain clearly what the

others indicate in metaphorical terms, and farther exalt the privileges of the Jews. Here we may remark, that although to the Gentiles God had given abundance of temporal good things, all this was still as nothing in comparison of what he had vouchsafed to the Jews. *Which hast the form of knowledge, and of the truth in the law.*—This does not signify semblance, in contradistinction to substance, for it was what the Jews boasted of. It means the representation or exhibition of truth which was contained in the law. The meaning is the same as when we speak of a body of divinity. The Jews considered that they had a body of truth and knowledge in the law. In these expressions, then, truth and knowledge are represented as embodied in a visible form. The Jews had that form in the law, that is to say, the law was to them a form and model, whence they were to take all the true notions of God, of his religion, and of the duty of man, and a rule to which they ought to be referred. In general, from all these advantages which God had so liberally bestowed on the Jews, we may collect, that his goodness had been great in not entirely abandoning the human race, but in having still lighted up for it, in a corner of the earth, the lamp of his law, to serve as his witness. His wisdom has not been less conspicuous in having

thus prepared the way for the mission of his Son, and the establishment of his gospel throughout the whole world. For the law was a schoolmaster to lead men to Christ. We also learn that when God does not accompany his external favours with the internal grace of his Holy Spirit, the depravity of man is such, that, instead of turning to God, he multiplies his transgressions, as the Apostle immediately proceeds to show by the example of the Jews.

*V. 21.—Thou, therefore, which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal?*

The Vulgate gives this and the two following verses without interrogation, but the ancient interpreters read them with the interrogation; the meaning, however, remains the same. After having exalted the advantages of the Jews above the Gentiles with as much force as they could have done themselves, Paul unfolds their hypocrisy, and exhibits their vices concealed under so fair an exterior, while he afterwards confirms the whole by the testimony of Scripture. In this manner he establishes more fully what he had said in the beginning of the chapter, that they condemned themselves, and that they could not hope to escape the just judgment of God, but were accumulating a treasure of wrath. *Teachest thou not thyself.*—This implies

that the Jews did not practise the precepts of their law. It implies that they were practically ignorant of it. *Preachest*, or *proclaimest*.—There is no reason to suppose, with Dr Mac-knight, that the learned Jews are here the persons addressed. The whole of the Jews are addressed as one person. What is said applies to them as a body, and is not exclusively applicable to the scribes and teachers, *Should not steal*.—The sins here specified were evidently such as were practised among the Jews. They are not merely supposed cases, or specifications for illustration. It is taken for granted that, as a body, the sins mentioned were very generally chargeable on them. Would the Apostle, addressing the Jews as one man, have asked why they were guilty of such a sin, if they were not very generally guilty of it? Mr Tholuck, then, has no ground to suppose the contrary.

*v. 22.*—*Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege?*

Oppression of the poor, and adultery, are the crimes with which the Jews were chiefly charged by our Lord. *Abhorrest idols*.—The Jews who, in the former ages of their history, were so prone to idolatry, even of the grossest kind, now generally abhorred it. The word in the original signifies to abominate, alluding to things

most disagreeable to the senses. This is according to God's account of the sin of idolatry. According to human standards of morality, idolatry appears a very innocent thing, or at least not very sinful or abominable. *Commit sacrilege.*—The word here used literally applies to the robbery of temples, for which the Jews had many opportunities, as well as of appropriating to themselves what was devoted to religion, as is complained of, Nehemiah, xiii. 10; and of robbing God in tithes and offerings, Malachi, iii. 8; also, of violating and profaning things sacred.

V. 23.—*Thou that makest a boast of the law, through breaking the law dishonourest thou God?*

The Jews gloried in the law as their great natural distinction, yet they were egregiously guilty of breaking it, which was highly inconsistent and dishonourable to God, not merely "as God was the author of the law," which is the explanation of Mr Stuart, but because they professed to be God's people and to glory in his law. In any other light, the breach of the law by the Gentiles, when they knew it to be God's law, would have been equally dishonourable to God. But God is dishonoured by the transgressions of his people, in a manner in which he is not dishonoured by the same transgressions in the wicked, who make no profession

of being his. It is a great aggravation of the sins of God's people, if they are the occasion of bringing reproach on his religion. The world is ready to throw the blame on that religion which he has given them ; and it is for this that the Apostle, in the following verse, reproaches the Jews in regard to the heathen. Sinners also are emboldened to sin with the hope of impunity, and opposers make a handle of it to impede the progress of Divine truth.

It appears that, in the above three verses, the Apostle alludes to what is said, Psalm, l. 16-21. "But unto the wicked God saith, What hast thou to do to declare my statutes, or that thou shouldst take my covenant in thy mouth? Seeing thou hatest instruction, and castest my words behind thee. When thou sawest a thief, then thou consentedst with him, and hast been partaker with adulterers. Thou givest thy mouth to evil, and thy tongue frameth deceit. Thou sittest and speakest against thy brother ; thou slanderest thine own mother's son. These things hast thou done, and I kept silence ; thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself : but I will reprove thee, and set them in order before thine eyes." On this it may be remarked, that this Psalm predicts the change which God was to make in the covenant at the coming of the Messiah, and likewise his rejection of his

ancient people. As to the change of the covenant, it was declared that the sacrifices of the law are not acceptable to him, and that henceforth he will not require from men any other than those of praises, thanksgivings, and prayers, which is the only sort of worship that can please him. And respecting the rejection of his ancient people, God reproaches them with their crimes, and more especially with hypocrisy, which are precisely the charges made against them in this place by the Apostle. The conclusion from the whole is, that the pretended justification of the Jews by the external advantages of the law was a vain pretence; and that as they had so vilely abused the law of which they boasted, according to the prediction of the Psalmist, it must follow, that the accusation now brought against them was established.

The Apostle in these verses exhibits the most lively image of hypocrisy. Was there ever a more beautiful veil than that under which the Jew presents himself? He is a man of confession, of praise, of thanksgiving,—a man whose trust is in the law, whose boast is of God, who knows the Divine will, who approves of things that are excellent; a man who calls himself a conductor of the blind, a light of those who are in darkness, an instructor of the ignorant, a teacher of babes; a man who



directs others, who preaches against theft, against adultery, against idolatry, and who glories in the commandments of the Lord. Who would not say that this is an angel arrayed in human form, a star detached from the firmament and brought nearer to enlighten the earth? But observe what is concealed under this mask. It is a man who is himself untaught, it is a thief, an adulterer, a sacrilegious person; in one word, a wicked man, who continually dishonours God by the transgression of his law. Is it possible to imagine a contrast more monstrous, than between these appearances and this reality?

Doubtless Paul might have presented a greater assemblage of particular vices that reigned among the Jews, for there were few to which that nation was not addicted. But he is content to generalize them all under these charges, that they did not teach themselves, that they dishonoured God by their transgressions of the law; and of these vices he has only particularized three, namely, theft, adultery, and sacrilege: and this for two reasons—first, because it was of these three that God had showed the greatest abhorrence in his law; and secondly, because these three sins, in spite of all their professions to the contrary, were usual and common among the Jews. There was no

people on earth more avaricious and self-interested than they; it is only necessary to read the narrations of their prophets and historians, to be convinced how much they were addicted to robbery, to usury, and to injustice. They were no less obnoxious to the charge of fornication and adultery, as appears from the many charges preferred against them in the writings of the prophets. They converted the offerings to the purposes of their avarice, they profaned the holy places by vile and criminal actions; and as the Lord himself, after Jeremiah, upbraided them, they turned God's house of prayer into a den of thieves.

These capital vices, which the Apostle stigmatizes in the Jews, like those which he had preferred against the Gentiles, stand opposed, on one hand, to the principal virtues which he elsewhere enumerates as comprehending the whole system of sanctity, namely, to live *soberly, righteously and godly*; and, on the other hand, they are conformable to the three odious vices which he had noted among the Gentiles, namely, *ungodliness, intemperance, unrighteousness*. For theft includes, in general, every notion of unrighteousness; adultery includes that of intemperance; and the guilt of sacrilege that of ungodliness. Hence it is easy to conclude, that whatever advantages the Jews possessed above

the Gentiles, they were, notwithstanding, before the tribunal of God, in the same condition—like them unrighteous, like them intemperate, like them ungodly, and, consequently, like them subjected to the same condemnation.

*V. 24.—For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you, as it is written.*

The charge alleged here against the Jews, is not that they themselves blasphemed the name of God, as some understand it, but that they gave occasion to the heathen to blaspheme. The Apostle is not charging the Jews with speaking evil of God, or with one particular sin, but with the breach of their law in general. He here confirms what he had just said to this purpose, in the foregoing verse, by the authority of Scripture. Many suppose that he refers to a passage of Isaiah, lii. 5, where the prophet says, “and my name continually every day is blasphemed.” But there the prophet does not charge the Jews, as having by their bad conduct occasioned the injury which the name of God received. He ascribes it, on the contrary, to the Assyrians by whom they had been subjected. In the passage before us the reference is to Ezek. xxxvi. 17-20, where it is evident that the Jews, by the greatness and the number of their sins, had given occasion to the Gentiles to insult and blaspheme

the holy name of God, which is precisely the meaning of the Apostle.

The Gentiles, as the prophet there relates, seized on two pretexts to insult the name of God, viz. in the consideration of the afflictions which the sins of his people had drawn upon them, and in the view of the sins themselves. According to the first, they accused the God of Israel of weakness and want of power, since he had not saved his people from so miserable a dispersion. According to the second, they imputed to the religion and the God of the Israelites all the crimes which they saw that people commit, as if it had been by the influence of God himself that they had committed them. It is on account of these two arrogant and malignant accusations that God reproaches his people for having profaned his name among the nations, and that he adds (not for the sake of his people, who had rendered themselves altogether unworthy, but for that of his own name) two promises opposed to those two accusations; the one of deliverance, the other of sanctification. "For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you unto your own land. Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean,"—v. 24, 25. I will

deliver you, in order to repel their insult on me, in accusing me of want of power. I will cleanse you, in order to vindicate myself from the accusation of being the author of your crimes. God had no need of either of these ways of justifying himself. He had shown, on numerous occasions, the irresistible power of his arm in favour of the Israelites; and the sanctity of his law was self-evident. Yet he promises to do these things for his own glory, inasmuch as the Gentiles and his people had dishonoured his name.

No accusation against the Jews could be more forcible than that which was in the verse before us preferred from the testimony of their own Scriptures. It proved, that not only were they chargeable before God with their own sins, but that they were likewise chargeable with the sins which the Gentiles committed in blaspheming his name. This showed clearly that they were no more prepared to sustain the judgment of the strict justice of God than were the Gentiles, whom they were as ready to condemn as the Apostle himself was.

*V. 25.—For circumcision verily profiteth, if thou keep the law: but if thou be a breaker of the law, thy circumcision is made uncircumcision.*

Paul here pursues the Jew into his last retreat, in which he imagined himself most secure. He presses him on the subject of circumcision,

which the Jews viewed as their stronghold—that rite even more ancient than Moses, and by which they were distinguished from the other nations. The sum of this, and the following verses to the end of the chapter, is, that the Jews being such as the Apostle had represented them, all their advantages, including circumcision, could only enhance their condemnation before the tribunal of God, and that, on the contrary, if the Gentiles, who have not received the law, observed its precepts, they would be justified without circumcision. Two things are here to be observed, namely, what is asserted of the Jews and of the Gentiles, and the proof that follows. The assertions are, that circumcision serves only as a ground of condemnation to transgressors of the law; and, on the other hand, that the want of it would be no detriment to those who fulfilled the law. The proof is, that before God the true Jew and the true circumcision consist not in external qualities, but in internal and real holiness. The reason why circumcision was not included in the enumeration before given of the advantages of the Jews, is, that in itself it is not an advantage, but only a sign of other advantages, and it is mentioned here, because, in the character of a sign, it includes them; to name circumcision, then, is to refer to them all. In this verse the Apostle does not speak of circumcision accord-

ing to its real and most important signification, as he does in the two concluding verses, but in that view in which the Jews themselves considered it, as the initiatory and distinctive rite of their religion, without the observance of which they believed that they could not be saved.

*Circumcision verily profiteth, if thou keep the law.*—Circumcision may be viewed in two lights, either as given to Abraham, or as enjoined by Moses. 1. It was the token of the covenant that Abraham should be the father of the promised Saviour, and, moreover, a seal of the righteousness imputed to him through faith, while uncircumcised, in order that he might be the father of all believers, whether circumcised or not, to whom righteousness should also be imputed. 2. Circumcision, as enjoined by Moses, was a part of his law, John, vii. 22, 23. In the first view it was connected with all the privileges of Israel, Philippians, iii. 4, 5; in the second it was a part of the law, whose righteousness is described, Rom. x. 5.\* The Jews entirely mis-

\* It is on this second view of circumcision being a part of the law, that the Apostle tells the Galatians, that if they were circumcised, they were debtors to do the whole law. They had professed to receive Christ, who is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth; but their want of confidence in Christ's righteousness, in which they professed to rest, was evident, by their adding to it the observance of circumcision. "Thus they returned to the law, and were

took the object of the law, Rom. v. 20, Gal. iii. 19, which shut up all under sin, Gal. iii. 22, by cursing every one who continued not in all things written in the book of the law to do them ; and in this view, as a part of the law of Moses, circumcision could only profit those who kept the whole law. But, instead of this, the name of God was blasphemed among the Gentiles, through the wickedness of the Jews, and hence their having the form of knowledge and of the truth in the law would only aggravate their condemnation. When, therefore, the Apostle says, "if thou keep the law," he supposes a case, not implying that it was ever verified ; but if it should exist, the result would be what is stated. If, on the other hand, the Jew was a *breaker of the law*, his circumcision was made uncircumcision, Jer. ix. 26 ; it would be of no more avail than if he had not received it, and would give him no advantage over the uncircumcised Gentile. This declaration is similar to the way in which our Lord answers the rich young man. If the law is perfectly kept, eternal life will be the reward, as the Apostle had also said, in verses 7 and 10 ; but if there be any breach of it, circumcision is of no value for salvation.

debtors to fulfil it."—Gal. v. 3, 4. The righteousness of the law and Christ's righteousness could not be mixed.



V. 26.—*Therefore, if the uncircumcision keep the righteousness of the law, shall not his uncircumcision be counted for circumcision?*

The Apostle does not here retract what he had said in the first chapter respecting the corruption and guilt of the Gentiles, but he supposes a case in regard to them, like that concerning the Jews in the preceding verse. This hypothetical mode of reasoning is common with Paul, of which we have an example in this same chapter, where he says, that *the doers of the law shall be justified*; of whom, however, in the conclusion of his argument, chap. iii. 19, he affirms that none can be found. The supposition, then, as to the obedience of the Gentile, though in itself impossible, is made in order to prove that, before the judgment-seat of God, neither circumcision nor uncircumcision enters at all into consideration, for justification or condemnation. If an uncircumcised Gentile kept the law, his uncircumcision would avail as much as the circumcision of the Jew. The reason of this is, that the judgment of God regards only the observance or the violation of the law, and not extraneous advantages or disadvantages, and, as is said above, with God there is no respect of persons. In reality, then, the Jews and Gentiles were on a level as to the possibility of salvation by the law; in confirmation of which truth, the enquiry here intro-

duced is for the conviction of the Jew on this important point. But what is true upon a supposition that never was realized, is actually true with respect to all who believe in Jesus. In him they have this righteousness which the law demands, and without circumcision have salvation. Dr. Macknight egregiously errs, when he supposes that the law here referred to is the law of faith, which heathens may keep and be saved; this is a complication of errors.

*V. 27.—And shall not uncircumcision which is by nature, if it fulfil the law, judge thee, who by the letter and circumcision dost transgress the law?*

Paul continues, in this verse, to reason on the same supposition as in the one preceding, and draws from it another consequence, which is, that if the Gentile, who is uncircumcised, fulfilled the law, he would not only be justified, notwithstanding his uncircumcision, but would judge and condemn the circumcised Jew who did not fulfil it. The reason of this conclusion is, that, in the comparison between the one and other, the case of the circumcised transgressor would appear much worse, because of the superior advantages he enjoyed. In the same way it is said, Matt. xii. 41, that the Ninevites shall condemn the Jews. *The uncircumcision which is by nature*—That is to say, the Gentiles in their natural uncircumcised state, in opposition to the

Jews, who have been distinguished and set apart by a particular calling of God. Dr. Macknight commits great violence when he joins "by nature" with the words, "fulfilling the law," as if it implied that some Gentiles did fulfil the law by the light of nature. *Who by the letter and circumcision dost transgress the law.*—Dr. Macknight affirms, that the common translation here "is not sense." But it contains a very important meaning. The Jews transgressed the law through the means of their covenant and circumcision misunderstood by them. This fact is notoriously true, they were hardened in their sin from a false confidence in their relation to God. Instead of being led to the Saviour by the law, according to its true end, they transgressed it through their views of the letter of the law and of circumcision; of both of which, especially of circumcision, they made a Saviour.

*V. 28.—For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh:*

*V. 29.—But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.*

The Apostle now passes to what is reality, not supposition; and shows that the natural Jew was only a type or representation of the spiritual Jew, whether the latter was of Abraham's race, or was of Gentile origin. The natural Jews

were the letter, of what believers are the spirit. In like manner, circumcision in the flesh was the letter, of which circumcision of the heart or regeneration is the spirit. This distinction between a Jew outwardly, merely in profession and outward form, and a Jew inwardly, is particularly referred to in this epistle, in the ninth chapter. In the same way, Paul speaks of circumcision, and even of the obedience that he yielded to the law, when he served in the oldness of the letter and not in newness of the spirit. He calls the whole "flesh," or merely outward services, destitute of the spirit. He also speaks of "Israel after the flesh," 1 Cor. x. 18, who were all along distinguished from Israel after the spirit. The former yielded merely an external obedience to the commandments, while, like Paul formerly, they were not aware of their full and spiritual import. Rom. vii. 5, 9. The distinction between the letter and the spirit is fully declared, 2 Cor. iii. The ministration of the one was a ministration of condemnation and of death, the ministration of the other of righteousness and of life. "The letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life." To this important distinction, then, the Apostle now calls the attention of the Jews, by whom in general it was entirely overlooked, and whose teachers were so far from viewing it in this light, that, as is seen

in the striking example of Nicodemus, they were ignorant of the doctrine of regeneration. It is in this sense that, in the 3d verse of the next chapter, Paul says, "what if some did not believe?" They said they were Jews, but were not. He is not a Jew, then, a confessor of Jehovah, and a true worshipper accepted by him, who is merely a Jew outwardly by birth and profession; but he is a Jew who is one inwardly, and according to the real import of the term, who possesses the circumcision, not only of the flesh, but of the heart; in the spirit and not in the letter. *Whose praise is not of men but of God.*—The Jews esteemed it the highest honour to belong to their nation, and they gloried over all the other nations. An uncircumcised person was regarded by them with abhorrence. They did not look to character, but to the circumstance of circumcision or uncircumcision. They who have the circumcision of the heart are despised by men, but are highly valued by God. Nothing could be more cogent, or more calculated to arrest the attention of the Jews, than this argument respecting the name in which they gloried, and circumcision, their distinguishing national rite, with which Paul here follows up what he had said concerning the demands of the law, and of their violations of its precepts.

## CHAPTER III. PART I.

ROMANS, III. 1-20.

THIS chapter consists of three parts. The first part extends to the 8th verse inclusively, and is designed to answer and remove some objections to the doctrine previously advanced by the Apostle. In the second part, from the 9th to the 20th verse, it is proved by the testimonies of various Scriptures that the Jews, as well as the Gentiles, are involved in sin and guilt, and consequently that not one can be justified by the law. The third part commences at verse 21, where the Apostle reverts to the declaration, ch. i. 17, with which his discussion commenced, and exhibits the true and only way of justification for all men, by the righteousness of God imputed through faith in Jesus Christ.

*V. 1.—What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision?*

If the preceding doctrine be true, it may be asked, what advantage hath the Jew over the Gentile, and what profit is there in circumcision, if it does not save from sin? If, on the contrary, the Jews, on account of their superior

privileges, will be more surely condemned before the tribunal of Divine justice, as the Apostle had just shown, it appears obviously improper to allege that God has favoured them above the Gentiles. This objection it was necessary to obviate, not only because it is specious, but because it is important, and might, in regard to the Jews, arrest the course of the gospel. It is specious, for if, in truth, the advantages of the Jews, so far from justifying them, contribute nothing to cause the balance of Divine judgment to preponderate in their favour—if their advantages rather enhance their condemnation, does it not appear that they are not only useless, but positively pernicious? In these advantages, then, it is impossible to repose confidence. But the objection is also important, for it would be difficult to imagine that all that God had done for the Jews, his care of them so peculiar, and his love of them so great—in short, all the privileges which Moses exalts so highly, were lavished on them in vain. The previous statement of the Apostle might therefore be injurious to the doctrine of the gospel, by rendering him more and more odious in the eyes of his countrymen, and therefore he had good reasons for fully meeting and answering this objection. In a similar way it is still asked by carnal professors of Christianity, of what use is obedience to the law

of God or the observance of his ordinances, if they do not save the soul, or contribute somewhat to this end?

V. 2.—*Much every way ; chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God.*

Paul here repels the objection as false and unfounded. Although the privileges of the Jews cannot come into consideration for their justification before the judgment-seat of God, it does not follow that they were as nothing, or of no advantage. On the contrary they were marks of the peculiar care of God for that people, while he had, as it were, abandoned all the other nations. They were as aids, too, which God had given to deliver them from the impiety and depravity of the Gentiles. Finally, the revelation made to them contained not only figures and shadows of the gospel, but also preparations for the new covenant. God had given nothing similar to the Gentiles ; the advantage, then, of the Jews was great. *Much every way.*—This does not mean in every sense, for the Apostle does not retract what he had said in the preceding chapter, namely, that their advantages were of no use for justification to the Jews continuing to be sinners ; for, on the contrary, in that case they only enhanced their condemnation. But this expression signifies, that their advantages were very great and very considerable.



*Chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God.*—The original denotes *primarily*, which is not a priority of order, but a priority of dignity and advantage; that is to say, that of all the advantages which God had vouchsafed to them, the most estimable and most excellent was that of having intrusted to them his oracles. The word here used for *oracles* signifies the responses or answers given by an oracle, and when the Scriptures are so designated, it implies that they are altogether, in word, as well as in sense, the communications of God. By these oracles we must understand in general all the Scriptures of the Old Testament, especially as they regarded the Messiah, and, in particular, the prophecies which predicted his advent. They were oracles, in respect that they were the words from the mouth of God himself, in opposition to the revelation of nature, which was common to Jews and Gentiles; and they were promises, in respect to their matter, because they contained the great promise of sending Jesus Christ into the world. God had committed these oracles to the Jews; they had been constituted their guardians and depositaries, and through them possessed the high character of the witnesses of God, Isaiah, xliii. 10, xliv. 8, even till the time of their execution, when they were commanded to be communicated to the whole world,

according to what Isaiah, ii. 3, had said,—“For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.” These oracles had not, however, been intrusted to them simply as good things for the benefit of others, but also for their own advantage, that they might themselves make use of them ; for in these oracles the Messiah was declared as the proper object of their confidence, and through them they had the means of becoming acquainted with the way of salvation.

But why were these oracles given so long before the coming of the Messiah? It was for three principal reasons—*first*, They were to serve as a testimony that, notwithstanding man’s apostacy, God had not abandoned the earth, but had always reserved for himself a people, and it was by these great and Divine promises that he had preserved his elect in all ages ; *secondly*, These oracles were to characterise and designate the Messiah when he should come, in order that he might be known and distinguished ; for they pointed him out in such a manner that he could be certainly recognised when he appeared. On this account Philip said to Nathaniel, John, i. 45, “ We have found him of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph ;” *thirdly*, They were to serve as a proof of the Divine origin of the

Christian religion, for the admirable correspondence between the Old Testament and the New is a clear and palpable demonstration of its divinity. It is, moreover, to be observed, that this favour of having been constituted the depositaries of the sacred oracles was peculiar to the Jews, and one in which the Gentiles did not at all participate. This is what the Apostle expressly here teaches, since he considers it as an illustrious distinction conferred upon his nation, a pre-eminence over all the kingdoms of the world.

But why again does the Apostle account the possession of these oracles their greatest advantage? Might not other privileges have been considered as equal, or even preferable, such as the glorious miracles which God had wrought for the deliverance of the Israelites; his causing them to pass through the Red Sea, in the face of all the pride and power of their haughty oppressor; his guiding them through the sandy desert by a pillar of fire by night, and of cloud by day; his causing them to hear his voice out of the fire, when he descended in awful majesty upon Sinai; or finally, his giving them his law, written with his own finger, on tables of stone? It is replied, the promises respecting the Messiah, and his coming to redeem men, were much greater than all the others. Apart from these, all the other advantages would not only have been useless, but

fatal to the Jews, for, being sinners, they could only have served to overwhelm them with despair, in discovering on the one hand, their corruption, unmitigated by the kindness of Jehovah; and, on the other, the avenging justice of God. In these circumstances they would have been left under the awful impossibility of finding any expiation for their sins. If, then, God had not added the promises concerning the Messiah, all the rest would have been death to them, and therefore the oracles which contained these promises were the first and chiefest of their privileges.

*V. 3.—For what if some did not believe? shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect?*

Dr Macknight is mistaken in supposing this verse to be the objection of a Jew; and it is not "*But what,*" as he translates the first words, it is "*For what.*" The Apostle answers the objection in stating it. "For what if some have not believed;" that is, "the unbelief of some is no objection to my doctrine." "Will their unbelief destroy the faithfulness of God?" This repels, and does not, as Dr Macknight understands it, assert the supposition. The meaning is, that the unbelief of the Jews did not destroy God's faithfulness with respect to the covenant with Abraham. Though the mass of his descendants were unbelievers at this time, yet many of them, both then, as the Apostle

asserts, chap. xi. 2, and at all other times, were saved in virtue of that covenant. The faith of God here signifies his faithfulness or veracity. Shall men's unbelief destroy God's character for veracity! Paul then anticipates and meets an objection which might be used against his assertion of the pre-eminence of the Jews over the Gentiles, testified by the fact, that to them God had confided his oracles. The objection is this—that since they had not believed in the Messiah whom these oracles promised, this advantage must not only be reckoned of little value, but, on the contrary, prejudicial.

In reply to this objection, the Apostle, in the first place, intimates, that their unbelief had not been universal, which is tacitly understood in his only attributing unbelief to *some*; for when it is said that some have not believed, it is plainly intimated that some have believed. It does not indeed appear that it would have been worthy of the Divine wisdom to have given to one nation, in preference to all others, so excellent and glorious an economy as was that of the Old Testament, to have chosen them above all others of his free love and good pleasure, and to have revealed to them the mysteries respecting the Messiah, while, at the same time, none of them should have responded to all this by a true faith. There is too much glory and too much majesty

in the person of Jesus Christ, and in his work of redemption, to allow it to be supposed that he should be revealed, even externally, by the word, without profit to some, Isaiah, lv. 10, 11. In all ages, the gospel has been the ministration of the Spirit, before as well as since the coming of the Messiah, although in a different measure. It was fitting, then, that the ancient promises, which were in substance the gospel, should be accompanied with a measure of that Divine Spirit who imprints them in the hearts of men, and that when the Spirit was to be poured out on all flesh, the nation of the Jews should not be absolutely deprived of this blessing. This was the first answer, namely, that unbelief had not been so general, but that many had profited by the oracles, and consequently, in respect to them at least, the advantage to the Jews had been great. But the Apostle goes farther; for, in the second place, he admits that many had fallen in incredulity, but denies that their incredulity impeached the faithfulness of God.

But it may be said, how could unbelief respecting these oracles be ascribed to the Jews, when they had only rejected the person of Jesus Christ? For they did not doubt the truth of the oracles; on the contrary, they expected with confidence their accomplishment; they only denied that Jesus was the predicted Messiah. It

is replied, that to reject as they did the person of Jesus Christ, was the same as if they had formally rejected the oracles themselves, since all that was contained in them could only unite and be accomplished in his person. The Jews, therefore, in reality, rejected the oracles, and so much the more was their guilt aggravated, inasmuch as it was their prejudices, and their carnal and unauthorized anticipations of a temporal Messiah, which caused their rejection of Jesus Christ. Thus it was a real disbelief of the oracles themselves, for all who reject the true meaning of the Scriptures, and attach to them another sense, do in reality disbelieve them, and set up in their stead a phantom of their own imagination, even while they profess to believe the truth of what the Scriptures contain. The Apostle, then, had good reason to attribute unbelief to the Jews respecting the oracles, but he denies that their unbelief can make void the veracity of God.

*V. 4.—God forbid : yea, let God be true, but every man a liar ; as it is written, That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged.*

*God forbid.*—Literally, let it not be, or far be it, a denial frequently made by the Apostle in the same way in this epistle. It intimates two things, namely, the rejecting of that which the objection would infer, not only as what is

false, but even impious ; for it is an affront to God to make his faithfulness or veracity dependent on the depravity of man, and his favour on our corruption. Though the privileges of the Jew, and the good which God had done for him, terminated only in his condemnation, by reason of his unbelief, it would be derogatory to the Almighty to question his faithfulness, because of the fault of the unprincipled object of these privileges. The Apostle also wished to clear his doctrine from this calumny, that God was not faithful in his promises, and sincere in his proceedings. *Let God be true, but every man a liar.*—The calling of men, inasmuch as it is of God, is faithful and sincere ; but the fact that it produces a result contrary to its nature and tendency, is to be attributed to man, who is always deceitful and vain. If the Jews had not been corrupted by their perversity, their calling would have issued in salvation ; if it has turned to their condemnation, this is to be attributed to their own unbelief. We must therefore always distinguish between what comes from God, and what proceeds from man ; that which is from God is good, and right, and true ; that which is from man is evil, and false, and deceitful. Mr Tholuck grievously errs in his Neological supposition that this inspired Apostle “ utters, in the warmth of his discourse, the wish that all mankind might prove covenant



breakers, as this would only tend to glorify God the more, by being the occasion of manifesting how great is his fidelity." This would be a bad wish; it would be desiring evil that good might come. It is not a wish. Paul states a truth. God in every instance is to be believed, although this should imply that every man on earth is a liar.

*As it is written, that thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged.*—This passage may be taken either in a passive signification, *when thou shalt be judged*, or in an active signification, *when thou shalt judge*. In this latter sense, according to the translation in Psalm, li. 6, the meaning will be clear, if we have recourse to the history referred to in the second book of Samuel, chap. xii. 7, 11, where it is said that Nathan was sent from God to David. In that address, God assumed two characters, the one, of the party complaining and accusing David as an ungrateful man, who had abused the favours he had received, and who had offended his benefactor; the other, of the judge who pronounces in his own cause, according to his own accusation. It is to this David answers, in the fourth verse of the Psalm: "*Against thee, thee only have I sinned and done this evil in thy sight, that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest:*" As if

he had said, thou hast good cause to decide against me; I have offended thee; I am ungrateful; thou hast reason to complain and to accuse me; thou hast truth and justice in the words which thy prophet has spoken from thee. He adds, *that thou mightest be clear when thou judgest*; that is to say, as my accuser thou wilt obtain the victory over me, before thy tribunal, when thou pronoucest thy sentence. In one word, it signifies, that whether in regard to the ground of that sentence or its form, David had nothing to allege against the judgment which God had pronounced in his own cause, and that he acknowledged in the whole the truth and justice of God. Hence, it clearly follows, that when God pleads against us, and when he sets before us the good he has done to us, and, on the other hand, the evil return we have made, it is always found that God is sincere and true towards us, but that we have been deceivers and unbelieving in regard to him, and therefore that our condemnation is just. This is precisely what the Apostle proposed to conclude against the Jews. God had extended to them his favours, and they had requited them only by their sins, and by a base incredulity. When, therefore, he shall bring them to answer before his judgment-seat, God will decide that he had been sincere in respect to them, and that they on the

contrary, had been wicked, whence their awful but just condemnation will follow.

The answer of the Apostle will lead to the same conclusion, if the passive sense, thou shalt be judged, be taken. Though so eminent a servant of God, David had been permitted to fall into his foul transgressions, that God might be justified in the declarations of his word, which assert that all men are evil, guilty, and polluted by nature, and that in themselves there is no difference. Had all the eminent saints, whose lives are recorded in Scripture, been preserved blameless, the world would have supposed that such men were an exception to the character given of man in the Word of God. They would have concluded that human nature is better than it is. But when Abraham and Jacob, David and Solomon, and Peter were permitted to manifest what is in human nature, God's word is justified in what it asserts of man. God "overcomes when he is judged;" that is, such examples as that of the fall of David, prove that man is what God declares him to be. Wicked men bring God to their bar, and accuse him by denying that man is as bad as he says. By such examples God is justified. The passive sense, then, of the word "judge," is a good and appropriate meaning; and the phrase acquitting, or clearing, or overcoming, is applicable, not

to the person who judges God, but to God who is judged. This meaning is also entirely to the Apostle's purpose. Let all men be accounted liars rather than impugn the veracity of God, because, in reality, all men are in themselves such. Whenever, then, the Divine testimony is contradicted by human testimony, let man be accounted a liar.

*V. 5.—But if our unrighteousness commend the righteousness of God, what shall we say? Is God unrighteous who taketh vengeance? (I speak as a man.)*

Out of the answer to the question in the first verse of this chapter, another objection might arise, which is here supposed. It is such as a Jew would make, but is proposed by the Apostle himself, as is intimated, when he says I speak as a man, just as any writer is in the habit of stating objections in order to obviate them. The objection is this; If then it be so that the righteousness of God has been made more fully to appear, or is more illustriously manifested from the occasion of the sin of man, shall we not say that it is unjust to punish the sin that has had this effect? *What shall we say?*—This is a sort of insult against the doctrine of the gospel, as if the objection was so strong and well-founded, that no reply could be made to it. *I speak as a man.*—That is to say, in the way that the impiety of men, and their want of reverence for God, leads them to speak.

V. 6.—*God forbid ; for then how shall God judge the world ?*

*Far be it.*—Paul thus at once rejects such a consequence, and so perverse a manner of reasoning, as altogether inadmissible, and proceeds to answer it by showing to what it would lead if admitted. *For then how shall God judge the world ?*—If the objection were well-founded it would entirely divest God of the character of judge of the world. The reason of this is manifest, for there is no sin that any man can commit which does not exalt some perfection of God, in the way of contrast. If, then, it be concluded, that because unrighteousness in man illustrates the righteousness of God, God is unrighteous when he taketh vengeance, it must be farther said, that there is no sin that God can justly punish ; whence it follows that God cannot any longer be the judge of the world. But this would subvert all order and all religion. The objection then is such that, were it admitted, all the religion in the world would at once be annihilated. But the sin of the world, for which men will be everlastingly punished, will no doubt be made to manifest God's glory. Such is the force of the Apostle's reply.

V. 7.—“ *For if the truth of God hath more abounded through my lie unto his glory ; why yet am I also judged as a sinner ?*”

This is the same objection as before, stated in other words, by a particular illustration. If

God's truth and faithfulness be more fully established and made more manifest by the lie of the sinner, that is, by his acting contrary to truth in not receiving but opposing the truth of God, why is he condemned as a sinner?

V. 8.—*And not rather (as we be slanderously reported, and as some affirm that we say), Let us do evil that good may come? whose damnation is just.*

This verse may be translated thus:—And why should we not do (as we are slanderously represented, and as some say that we teach, that we should do) evil that good may come? The word *do* must here be repeated twice, but this is not necessary in the original. The adoption of the wicked maxim, that it is lawful to do evil that good may come, is here shown to be the inevitable consequence of the above perverse manner of reasoning, and a parenthesis is thrown in, which asserts that the Apostle himself was falsely charged with this doctrine. The meaning is, if this good effect of glorifying God is to follow, why may not the evil be done that leads to so desirable a result? This, then, is the objection proposed in the fifth verse carried out to its full length. Paul had already replied to it in substance, in the sixth verse, in a way sufficient to expose both its hollowness and impiety. Now, when it is in nowise altered, but

more fully exhibited in all its deformity, and the principle of action to which it leads clearly avowed, no farther answer being necessary, he at once puts it down by a strong unqualified denunciation of the awful punishment it deserves, and which shall fall on those by whom it is maintained. His indignant manner of cutting short the matter was the more proper, since not only was the principle of doing evil that good might come avowed in extenuation of sin and unbelief, but it was even slanderously laid to the charge of himself and his fellow-labourers that he taught this doctrine. It was fitting, then, that an expression of abhorrence, containing a solemn denunciation of the vengeance of God, on account of such a complication of perversity and falsehood, should for ever close the subject. The condemnation of persons who held such a maxim is declared to be just, not only because they were calumniators, but likewise because they themselves maintained that wicked principle which they slanderously ascribed to their adversaries. Men often in this manner bring specious reasonings to contradict the decisions of the Divine word; but Christians ought to credit the testimony of God implicitly upon every subject, though many subtle and plausible objections should present themselves which they are unable to answer.

V. 9.—“ *What then? are we better than they?*” *No, in no-wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin.*

After having proposed and replied to the above objections to his doctrine, Paul here resumes the thread of his discourse, by showing that, although he has admitted that the advantages of the Jews over the Gentiles are great, it must not thence be concluded that the Jews are better than the others. *What then? Are we better than they?*—The common translation here is juster than Mr Stuart's; which is, “have we any preference?” The Jews had a preference. The Apostle allows that they had many advantages, and that they had a preference over the Gentiles, but he denies that in their nature or character they were better. *Not at all.*—By no means. This is a strong denial of the thing that is the subject of the question. Then he gives the reason of the denial; namely, that he had before charged both Jews and Gentiles as being *all under sin*. This he had proved in the first and second chapters. *All* not only signifies that there were sinners among them both, for the Jews did not deny this; on this point there was no difference between them and the Apostle, but he includes all singly, without one exception. It is in this sense of universality that what he has hitherto said, both of



Jews and Gentiles, must be taken. Of all that multitude of men there was not one found who had not wandered from the right way. One alone, Jesus Christ, is without sin, and it is on this account that the Scriptures call him the "*Just One*," to distinguish him by the singular character from the rest of men. All are *under sin*, both in its guilt and condemnation, as well as in its power and pollution. Here this means *guilty* as being sinners, in the same sense as when it is said, Gal. iii. 22, "The Scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe." It evidently appears that in this sense the expression "under sin," must be taken, because in this discussion, being *under sin*, stands opposed to being *under grace*, Rom. vi. 14. Now, to be under grace signifies, that we are justified by the mercy of God, who has pardoned our sins. To be *under sin*, then, signifies to be guilty in the eye of justice. It is in reference to the tribunal of Divine justice, and in the light of condemnation, that Paul has been considering sin, both in respect to Jews and Gentiles, as he afterwards explains himself clearly, at the 19th verse, *that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.*

V. 10.—*As it is written, There is none righteous, no not one.*

After having proceeded in his discussion, ap-

pealing to the natural sentiments of conscience and undeniable fact, Paul now employs the authority of Scripture, and alleges several passages drawn from the books of the Old Testament, written at different times, in order more clearly to show the universal corruption both of Jews and Gentiles, that he might prove them all guilty before the tribunal of God. *There is none righteous.*—The words in this verse, and those contained in verses 11 and 12, are taken from Psalms, xiv. and liii., which are the same as to the sense, although they do not follow the exact expressions. But does it seem proper that Paul should draw a consequence in relation to all, from what David has only said of the wicked in his time? The answer is, that the terms which David employs are too strong not to contemplate the universal corruption of the human race. “The Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God. They are all gone aside; they are all together become filthy; there is none that doeth good—no, not one.” This notifies universal depravity, so that the application is just according to the prophet. It is not that he means to deny that God had sanctified some men by his Spirit; for on the contrary, in the same Psalm, he speaks of the afflicted, of whom God is the refuge; but

he means to say that in the state of nature, and without the grace of regeneration, which God vouchsafes only to his elect, who are a small number, the whole human race is in a state of universal depravity and guilt. This is also what is meant by Paul, and it is the use, as is clear from the context, that he designed to make of this passage of David.

Dr Macknight supposes that this expression, "there is none righteous," applies to the Jewish common people, and is an Eastern expression which means that comparatively very few are excepted. There is not the shadow of ground for such a supposition. It is evident that both the passages quoted, and the Apostle's argument, require every individual of the human race to be included. And on what pretence can it be restricted to "the Jewish common people?" Whether were they or their leaders the objects of the severest reprehensions of our Lord during his ministry? Did not Jesus pronounce the heaviest woes on the Scribes and Pharisees? Matt. xxiii. 13. Did he not tell the chief priests and elders that the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of heaven before them? Matt. xxi. 31.

Mr Stuart also supposes that the charge is not unlimited, and justifies this by alleging that the believing Jews must be excepted. But

it is clear that the believing Jews are not excepted. For though they are now delivered, yet they were by nature under sin as well as others, and that all men are so is what Paul is teaching. In this manner Dr Macknight and Mr Stuart remove the foundation of the proofs here adduced by the Apostle, that all men are sinners. Mr Stuart also appears to limit the charges to the Jews, and in support of this refers to the 9th and 19th verses. The 9th verse speaks of both Jews and Gentiles, the purpose of the 19th evidently is to prove that the Jews are not excepted, while the 20th clearly shows that the whole race of mankind are included, it being the general conclusion which the Apostle draws from all he had said, from the 18th verse of the first chapter, respecting both Jews and Gentiles, of whom he affirms, in the 9th verse, that they were all under sin. And is it not strictly true, in the fullest import of the term, that there is none righteous in himself, no, not one? Is not righteousness the fulfilling of the law? And do not the Scriptures testify, and every where show, that "there is no man that sinneth not?" 1 Kings, viii. 46. "Who can say I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin? Prov. xx. 9. "For there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good and sinneth not," Eccl. vii. 20. And the Apostle James,

including himself as well as his brethren to whom he wrote, declares, "In many things we all offend."

In the same way, Taylor of Norwich, in his Commentary, supposes that in this and the following verses, to 19th, the Apostle means no universality at all, but only the far greater part, and that they refer to bodies of people, of Jews and Gentiles in a collective sense, and not to particular persons. To this President Edwards, in his treatise on Original Sin, p. 245, replies, "If the words which the Apostle uses, do not most fully and determinately signify an universality, no words ever used in the Bible are sufficient to do it. I might challenge any man to produce any one paragraph in the Scripture, from the beginning to the end, where there is such a repetition and accumulation of terms, so strongly and emphatically, and carefully, to express the most perfect and absolute universality, or any place to be compared to it. What instance is there in the Scripture, or indeed any other writing, when the meaning is only the much greater part, where this meaning is signified in such a manner by repeating such expressions—*They are all—they are all—they are all—together—every one—all the world*; joined to multiplied negative terms, to show the universality to be without exception; saying, *There is no flesh—*

*there is none—there is none—there is none—there is none*, four times over ; besides the addition of *no*, *not one*—*no*, *not one*—once and again !—When the Apostle says, *That every mouth may be stopped*, must we suppose that he speaks only of those two great collective bodies, figuratively ascribing to each of them a mouth, and means that those two mouths are stopped ?” Again, p. 241, “Here the thing which I would prove, *viz.* that mankind, in their first state, before they are interested in the benefits of Christ’s redemption, are universally wicked, is declared with the utmost possible fulness and precision. So that, if here this matter be not set forth plainly, expressly, and fully, it must be because no words can do it ; and it is not in the power of language, or any manner of terms and phrases, however contrived and heaped one upon another, determinately to signify any such thing.”

*V. 11.—There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God.*

Paul here applies equally to Jews and Gentiles, that which he charges upon the Gentiles, Eph. iv. 18, “*Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness (or hardness) of their hearts.*” This is true of every individual of the human race naturally.

The assertion, then, requires no limitation with respect to those who are now believers, for they were originally like others. All men are naturally ignorant of God, and by neglecting the one thing needful, show no understanding. They act more irrationally than the beasts. *None that seeketh after God.*—To seek God is an expression frequently used in Scripture to denote the acts of religion and piety. It supposes the need all men have to go out of themselves to seek elsewhere their support, their life and happiness, and the distance at which naturally we are from God, and God from us—we by our perversity, and he by his just wrath. It teaches how great is the blindness of those who seek any thing else but God, in order to be happy, since true wisdom consists in seeking God for this, for he alone is the sovereign good to man. It also teaches us that during the whole course of our life, God proposes himself as the object that men are to seek, for the present is the time of his calling them, and if they do not find him, it is owing to their perversity, which causes them to flee from him, or to seek him in a wrong way. To seek God is, in general, to answer to all his relative perfections; that is to say, to respect and adore his Sovereign Majesty, to instruct ourselves in his word as the primary truth, to obey his commandments as the com-

mandments of the Sovereign Legislator of men, to have recourse to him by prayer as the origin of all things. In particular, it is to have recourse to his mercy by repentance; it is to place our confidence in Him; it is to ask for his Holy Spirit to support us, and to implore his protection and blessing.

*V. 12.—They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.*

Sin is a wandering or departure from the right way; that is to say, out of the way of duty and obligation, out of the way of the means which conduct to felicity. These are the ways open before the eyes of men to walk in them; he who turns from them, wanders out of the way. The prophet here teaches what is the nature of sin, he also shows us what are its consequences; for as the man who loses his way cannot have any rest in his mind, nor any security, it is the same with the sinner; and as a wanderer cannot restore himself to the right way without the help of a guide, in the same manner the sinner cannot restore himself, if the Holy Spirit does not come to his aid. *They are together become unprofitable.*—They have become corrupted, or have rendered themselves useless; for every thing that is corrupted loses its use. They are become unfit for that for which God made them; unprofit-



able to God, to themselves, and to their neighbour. *There is none that doeth good, no not one.*—This is the same as is said above, *there is none righteous*, and both the prophet and the Apostle make use of this repetition to enhance the greatness and the extent of human corruption.

V. 13.—*Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips.*

What the Apostle had said in the preceding verses was general, now he descends to something more particular, both respecting words and actions. As to words he marks all the organs of speech, the *throat*, the *tongue*, the *lips*, the *mouth*. All this tends to aggravate the depravity of which he speaks. The first part of this verse is taken from Psalm v. 9, and the last from Psalm cxl. 3. *Open Sepulchre.*—This figure graphically portrays the filthy conversation of the wicked. Nothing can be more abominable to the senses than an open sepulchre, where a dead body beginning to putrify steams forth its tainted exhalations. What proceeds out of their mouth is infected and putrid; and as the exhalation from a sepulchre proves the corruption within, so it is with the corrupt conversation of sinners. *With their tongues they have used deceit*—used them to deceive their neighbour, or

they have flattered with the tongue, and this flattery is joined with the intention to deceive. This also characterises, in a striking manner, the way in which men employ speech to deceive each other, in bargains, and in every thing in which their interest is concerned. *The poison of asps is under their lips.*—This denotes the mortal poison, such as that of vipers or asps, that lies concealed under the lips, and is emitted in poisoned words. As these venomous creatures kill with their poisonous sting, so slanderers and evil-minded persons destroy the characters of their neighbours. “Death and life,” it is said, in the Book of Proverbs, “are in the power of the tongue.”

V. 14.—*Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness.*

This is taken from Psalm x. 7. Paul describes in this and the foregoing verse the four principal vices of the tongue, filthy and infected discourse, deceitful flatteries, subtle and piercing evil speaking, finally outrageous and open malediction. This last relates to the extraordinary propensity of men to utter imprecations against one another, proceeding from their being hateful and hating one another. *Bitterness* applies to the bitterness of spirit to which men give vent by bitter words. All deceit and fraud is bitter in the end; that is to say, desolating and afflicting.

V. 15.—*Their feet are swift to shed blood.*

After having spoken of the depravity of the

tongue, the Apostle comes to that of actions, which he describes in this and the two following verses. This passage is taken from Isaiah, lix. 7, and from Proverbs, i. 16, which describe the general corruption of men, the injustice and violence committed among them that are not restrained either by the consideration of the good of society, or by respect for the laws.

*V. 16.—Destruction and misery are in their ways.*

This must be understood in an active sense ; that is to say, they labour to destroy and to ruin one another.

*V. 17.—And the way of peace have they not known.*

They have not known peace to follow and approve of it, in order to procure the good of their neighbour, for peace imports prosperity, or the way to maintain concord and friendship. Such is a just description of man's ferocity, which fills the world with animosities, quarrels, hatred in their private connexions of families and neighbourhoods ; and with revolutions and wars, and murders in public societies. The most savage animals do not destroy so many of their own species to appease their hunger, as man destroys of his fellows to satiate his ambition, his revenge, or cupidity.

*V. 18. There is no fear of God before their eyes.*

This is taken from Psalm, xxxvi. 1. It is astonishing that men, while they acknowledge

that there is a God, should act without any fear of his displeasure. Yet this is their character. They fear a worm of the dust like themselves, but disregard the Most High.

The Apostle could have collected a much greater number of passages from the law and the prophets to prove what he intended, for there is nothing more frequent in the Old Testament than the reproaches of God against the Israelites, and all men, on account of their abandoning themselves to sin ; but these form a very complete description of the reign of sin among men. The first of them, v. 10, 11, 12, mark the character or disorders of the *heart*; the second, v. 13, 14, those of the *words*; the third, v. 15, 16, 17, those of the *actions*; and the last, v. 18, declares the *cause* of the whole. In the first, we see the greatness of the corruption, and its universality. Its greatness, in the extinction of all righteousness, of all wisdom, of all religion, of all rectitude, of all that is proper, and, in one word, of all that is good. Its universality, in that it has seized upon the whole man, without leaving any thing that is sound or entire. In the second, we see the four vices of the tongue which have been already pointed out. In the third, justice violated in what is most sacred,—the life of man ; charity subverted in doing the evil, which it

prohibits; and that, which is most fundamental and most necessary, peace destroyed. And in the last, what is most essential entirely cast off, which is the fear of God. In this manner, having commenced his enumeration of the evils to which men are addicted, by pointing out their want of understanding and desire to seek God, the Apostle terminates his description by exposing the source from whence they all flow, which is, that men are destitute of the fear of God,—his fear is not before their eyes to restrain them from evil. They love not his character, not rendering to it that veneration which is due—they respect not his authority. Such is the state of human nature, while the heart is not changed. From all this a faint idea may be formed of what will be the condition, in the future state, of those who shall perish, from whom the gospel has been hid—of those of whom the god of this world has blinded their minds, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine into them. Then the various restraints which in this life operate so powerfully, so extensively, and so constantly, will be taken off, and the natural depravity of fallen man will burst forth in all its unbridled and horrible wickedness.

V. 19.—*Now we know that what things soever the law saith,*

*it saith to them who are under the law : that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.*

Paul here anticipates two general answers which might be made to those passages which he had just quoted, to convict the Jews, as well as all other men, of sin. First, that they are applicable not to the Jews but to the Gentiles, and that therefore it is improper to employ them against the Jews. Second, that even if they referred to the Jews, they could only be applied to some wicked persons among them, and not to the whole nation, so that what he intended to prove could not thence be concluded, namely, that no man can be justified before God by the law. In opposition to these two objections, he says, that *when the law speaks, it speaks to those who are under it—to the Jews, therefore ; and that it does so in order that the mouths of all, without distinction, may be stopped.* If God were to try the Jews according to the law, they could not stand before his strict justice, as David said, “ If thou, Lord, shouldst mark iniquity ; O Lord, who shall stand,” Psalm, cxxx.3. And, in addition to this, whatever there was of piety, and holiness in some, it was not by the efficacy of the law, but by that of the Gospel—not by the spirit of bondage, but by the spirit of adoption ; so that it remains true, that all those who are under the law are under sin.

*That, or in order that.*—This must be taken in three senses. The law brought against the Jews those accusations and reproaches of which Paul had produced a specimen in the passages quoted, in order that every mouth may be stopped; this is the end which the law proposed. This was also the object of God when he gave the law, for he purposed to make manifest the iniquity of man, and the rights of justice. It was likewise the result of the legal economy. *Every mouth may be stopped.*—This expression should be carefully remarked. For if a man had fulfilled the law, he would have something to allege before the Divine tribunal, to answer to the demands of justice; but when convicted as a sinner, he can only be silent—he can have nothing to answer to the accusations brought against him; he must remain convicted by them. This silence, then, is a silence of confession, of astonishment, and of conviction. This is what is elsewhere expressed by confusion of face. “O Lord, righteousness belongeth unto thee; but unto us, confusion of faces,” Daniel, ix. 7.

*And all the world.*—That is to say, both Jews and Gentiles. The law of nature, written on their consciences, sufficiently convicts the Gentiles, and as to the Jews, who try to stifle the conviction of their consciences by abusing the advantages which the law has brought to them!

that law itself, which accuses them, convicts them also. This expression, then, must include the whole human race. It applies to all men, of every age and every nation. None of all the children of Adam are excepted. Words cannot more clearly include, in one general condemnation, the whole human race. Who can be excepted? Not any of the Gentiles, since they have all been destitute of the knowledge of the true God. Not the Jews, for they are those whom the law itself accuses. Not believers, for they are only such through the acknowledgment they have made of their sins, since grace is the remedy to which they have had recourse to be freed from condemnation. All the world, then, signifies all men universally.

*May become guilty.*—That is, be compelled to acknowledge themselves guilty. The term guilty signifies subject to condemnation, and respects the Divine judgment. This manifestly proves, that in all this discussion the Apostle considers sin in relation to the condemnation which it deserves. *Before God.*—When the question is about appearing before men, people find many ways of escape, either by concealing their actions, or by disguising facts, or by disputing what is right. And even when men pass in review before themselves, self-love finds excuses, and various shifts are resorted to, and false reasonings, to



deceive. But nothing of this sort can have place before God. For although the Jews flattered themselves, in the confidence of their own righteousness, and on this point all men try to deceive themselves, it will be entirely different in the day when they shall appear before the tribunal of God; for then there will be no more illusions of conscience, no more excuses, no way to escape condemnation. His knowledge is infinite, his hand is omnipotent, his justice is incorruptible, and nothing can be concealed from him. Before him, therefore, every mouth will be stopped, and all the world must confess themselves guilty.

*V. 20.—Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight; for by the law is the knowledge of sin.*

This is the final conclusion drawn from the whole of the preceding discussion, beginning at verse 18th of chapter 1st. The Apostle had shown that both the Gentiles and the Jews are under sin; that is, they have brought down upon themselves the just condemnation of God. He had decided the same thing in the preceding verse, according to the Scriptures he had before quoted. *Therefore.*—The conclusion, then, from the whole is evident. *By the deeds of the law*, or as in the original, *of law.*—The reference here is to every law that God has given to man,

whether expressed in words, or imprinted in the heart. It is that law which the Gentiles have transgressed, which they have naturally inscribed in their hearts. It is that law which the Jews have violated, when they committed theft, adulteries, and sacrileges, which convicted them of impiety, of evil speaking, of calumny, of murder, of injustice. In one word, it is that law which shuts the mouth of the whole world, as had been said in the preceding verse, and brings in all men guilty before God.

*The deeds, or works of law.*—When it is said, by works of law no flesh shall be justified, it is not meant that the law, whether natural or written, was not capable of leading to righteousness, or that the righteousness thus resulting, were men to fulfil all that it demands, would not be a true righteousness, but that no man being able to plead the fulfilment of the law before the tribunal of God—that perfect obedience which it requires—no man can receive by the law a sentence pronouncing him to be righteous. To say that the works of the law are not good and acceptable, and would not form a true righteousness, would contradict what had been affirmed in the preceding chapter, v. 13—that *the doers of the law shall be justified*. The Apostle, then, does not propose here to show either the want of power of the law, or the

insufficiency of its works for justification, but solely to prove that no man fulfils the law, that both Gentiles and Jews are under sin, and that all the world is guilty before God. *No flesh*.—This reference appears to be to Psalm cxliii. David there says, “*no man living.*” Paul says, “*no flesh.*” The one is a term which marks a certain dignity, the other denotes meanness. The one imports, that whatever excellence there might be supposed to be in man, he could not be justified before God; and the other, that being only flesh, that is to say, corruption and weakness, he ought not to pretend to justification by himself. Thus, on whatever side man regards himself, he is far from being able to stand before the strict judgment of God.

*Shall be justified*.—The meaning of this term, as used by the Apostle in the whole of this discussion, is evident by the different expressions in this verse. It appears by the *therefore* with which the verse begins, that it is a conclusion which the Apostle draws from the whole of the foregoing discussion. Now, all this discussion has been intended to show that neither Gentiles nor Jews could elude the condemnation of the Divine judgment. The conclusion, then, that no flesh shall be justified in his sight by the works of the law, can only signify, that no man can obtain by means of his works a favourable sen-

tence from Divine justice. It is in this sense that David has taken the term *justify* in Psalm cxliii, to which the Apostle had reference, *Enter not into judgment with thy servant; for in thy sight shall no man living be justified.* The terms, *in thy sight*, testify the same thing, for they accommodate themselves to the idea of a tribunal, before which men must appear to be judged. It is the same with regard to the other terms, *by the deeds of the law*; for if we understand a justification of judgment, the sense is plain; no one can plead before the tribunal of God a perfect and complete fulfilment of the law, such as strict and exact justice demands; no one, then, can in that way obtain justification.

*For by the law is the knowledge of sin.*—Paul does not here intend simply to say, that the law makes known in general the nature of sin, inasmuch as it discovers what is acceptable or displeasing to God, what he commands, and what he forbids; but he means to affirm that the law convicts men of being sinners. For his words refer to what he had just before said in the preceding verse, that *all that the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law; that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God*, which marks a conviction of sin. But how, it may be said, does the law give that knowledge or that conviction of sin? It

does so in two ways. By the application of its commandments, and its prohibitions in the present state in which man is placed, for it excites and awakens the conscience, and gives birth to accusing thoughts. This is common both to the written law and the law of nature. It does this, secondly, by the declaration of punishments and rewards which it sets before its transgressors and observers, and as it excites the conscience, and gives rise to fear and agitation, thus bringing before the eyes of men the dreadful evil of sin. This also is alike common to the law of nature and the written law.

Here it is important to remark, that God, having the design to establish only one way of justification for all men, has permitted, in his providence, that all should be guilty. For if there had been any excepted, there would have been two different ways of justification, and consequently two true religions, and two true churches, and believers would not have had that unity of communion which grace produces. It was necessary, then, to permit that all should become guilty, Rom. xi. 32; Gal. iii. 22.

## CHAPTER III. PART II.

## ROMANS, III. 21.

At the opening of his discussion, chap. i. 16, Paul had announced that the gospel is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth, *because therein is the righteousness of God revealed*. He had said that the just shall live by faith, intimating that there is no other way of obtaining life. In proof of this he had declared, that the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, and had shown at large, that both Jews and Gentiles are all under sin, and that, therefore, by obedience to law no flesh shall be justified. The way was thus prepared for proceeding to speak more particularly of the *righteousness of God*, to describe the manner in which it is conferred, and the character of those by whom it is received. To this subject, therefore, he here reverts.

V. 21.—*But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets.*

*Now*—That is to say, under the preaching of the Gospel—in the period of the revelation

of the Messiah ; for it denotes the time present, in opposition to that time when God appeared not to take notice of the state of the Gentile nations, as it is said, Acts, xvii. 30, "The times of this ignorance God winked at, but *now* commandeth all men every where to repent." And also in opposition to the legal economy respecting the Jews, as again it is said, John, i. 17, "The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." This is what the Scriptures call "the fulness of times," Eph. i. 10 ; Gal. iv. 4. "The last days," Isa. ii. 2 ; Heb. i. 2 ; Acts, ii. 17. "The acceptable year of the Lord," Isa. lxi. 2. "*Now* is the accepted time ; behold, *now* is the day of salvation," 2 Cor. vi. 2. The day of the Saviour that Abraham saw, John, viii. 56.

*The righteousness of God.*—This is one of the most important expressions in the Scriptures. It frequently occurs both in the Old Testament and the New ; it stands connected with the reasoning of the whole of the first five chapters of this Epistle, and characterises the obedience by which we are saved. Although perfectly clear in itself, its meaning has been involved in much obscurity by the learned labours of some who know not the truth, and by the perversions of others by whom it has been greatly corrupted. By many it has been misunderstood, and has in

general been very slightly noticed by those whose views concerning it are correct and Scriptural. To consider its real signification is the more necessary, as it does not appear always to receive that attention from Christians which its importance demands. When the question is put, Why is the Gospel the power of God unto salvation? how few give that clear and unfaltering answer with the Apostle, *Because therein is THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD revealed*. Before proceeding to attend to the true import of this phrase, it is proper to advert to some of the significations that are erroneously attached to it. Of these I shall select only a few examples from many that might be furnished.

Origen understood by this righteousness God's attribute of justice; while Chrysostom explained it as Divine clemency.

According to Dr Campbell of Aberdeen, *the righteousness of God* consists in man's conformity to the declared will of God. In his note on Matth. vi. 33, he says, '*The righteousness of God*, in our idiom, can mean only the justice or moral rectitude of the Divine nature, which it were absurd in us to seek, it being, as all God's attributes are, inseparable from his essence. But in the Heb. idiom, that righteousness, which consists in a conformity to the declared will of God, is called *his righteousness*.



‘ In this way the phrase is used by Paul, Rom.  
‘ iii. 21, 22 ; x. 3, where the *righteousness of God*  
‘ is opposed by the Apostle to that of the un-  
‘ converted Jews ; and *their own righteousness*,  
‘ which he tells us they went about to establish,  
‘ does not appear to signify their personal right-  
‘ eousness, any more than the righteousness of  
‘ God signifies his personal righteousness. The  
‘ word *righteousness*, as I conceive, denotes there  
‘ what we should call a system of morality or  
‘ righteousness, which he denominates their own,  
‘ because fabricated by themselves, founded  
‘ partly on the letter of the law, partly on tra-  
‘ dition, and consisting mostly in ceremonies  
‘ and mere externals. This creature of their  
‘ own imaginations they had cherished, to the  
‘ neglect of that purer scheme of morality which  
‘ was truly of God, which they might have  
‘ learned even formerly from the law and the  
‘ prophets, properly understood, but now more  
‘ explicitly from the doctrine of Christ. That  
‘ the phrase, *the righteousness of God*, in the  
‘ sense I have given, was not unknown to the  
‘ O. T. writers, appears from Micah, vi. What  
‘ is called, v. 5, *the righteousness of the Lord*,  
‘ which God wanted that the people should  
‘ know, is explained, v. 8, to be *what the Lord*  
‘ *requireth* of them, namely, *to do justly, to love*  
‘ *mercy, and to walk humbly with their God.*’

Such is the explanation by this learned critic of that leading phrase, "the righteousness of God," according to which the reason why the Gospel is the power of God unto salvation, is, *because therein a pure scheme of morality is revealed.* Were this explanation just, so far from being the reason why the Gospel should be the means of salvation to sinners, it would make it the cause of their universal condemnation.

Dr Macknight supposes, that *the righteousness of God* signifies a righteousness belonging to faith itself, and not the righteousness conveyed and received by faith. '*Righteousness by faith,*' he says, on Rom. i. 17, 'is called *the righteousness of God*, 1. Because God hath enjoined faith as the righteousness which he will count to sinners, and hath declared that he will accept and reward it as righteousness : 2. Because it stands in opposition to *the righteousness of men*, which consists in a sinless obedience to the law of God.' Thus, while Dr Macknight differs from Dr Campbell in the meaning of the expression, *the righteousness of God*, he so far coincides with him in his radical error as to suppose that it does not signify the righteousness which God *provides*, but the righteousness which he *requires* men to perform. The explanations of both of these writers are destructive of the Scripture doctrine of justification, opposed to the jus-

tice of God, subversive of the plan of salvation, and render the whole train of the Apostle's reasoning that follows, Rom. i. 16 to the end of the 5th chapter, inconclusive and self-contradictory.

Archbishop Newcombe, whose translations are so much eulogized by Socinians, together with many who have followed him, translates this phrase. "God's *method* of justification." What the Apostle has declared in precise terms, is thus converted into a general and indefinite annunciation, pointing to a different sense. In the Socinian version, as might be anticipated, it is also translated, "God's *method* of justification."

Mr Tholuck explains it thus:—"The gospel makes known a way to that perfect fulfilment of the law which is required by God."

Mr Stuart, in his translation of the epistle, renders this phrase, in Rom. i. 17, and iii. 21, "The justification which is of God;" and in his explanation of it, "*the justification which God bestows, or, the justification of which God is the author.*" He observes that this 'is a phrase among the most important which the New Testament contains, and fundamental in the right interpretation of the epistle before us.' This is true; and the effect of his misunderstanding the proper signification of the

original word in these passages, and rendering it *justification*, instead of *righteousness*, appears most prominently in several of his subsequent interpretations, especially in the beginning of the fourth chapter, as shall be afterwards pointed out, where he entirely misrepresents the doctrine of justification. The translation he has given he endeavours to defend at some length; but none of his allegations support his conclusion. The proper meaning of the original word in chap. i. 17, and iii. 21, which he makes justification, is righteousness; and this meaning will apply in the other passages where it is found. In the New Testament it occurs ninety-two times, and, in the common version, is uniformly rendered *righteousness*. It occurs thirty-six times in the Epistle to the Romans, in which Mr Stuart has sixteen times translated it righteousness. But he appears to have been led to adopt the translation he has given in the above verses from the supposed necessity of the case; and truly it was necessary for one like Mr Stuart, who not only denies expressly the imputation of Adam's sin to his posterity, but also the imputation of Christ's *righteousness* to believers. This should put Christians on their guard respecting a translation founded on the denial that Christ's righteousness is placed to their account for salvation, which Dr Macknight maintains is not to be found in the Bible.

Mr Stuart observes that there are three expressions, viz. ‘δικαιοσύνη, δικαίωμα, and δικαίωσις, all employed occasionally in the very same sense, viz. that of justification, *i. e.* acquittal, pardon, freeing from condemnation, accepting and treating as righteous.’ There may be situations in which the one might supply the place of the other, but they have a clear characteristic difference. The difference appears to be this, δικαιοσύνη, the original word in the verse before us, is not justification; it signifies justice or righteousness in the abstract; that is, the quality of righteousness. It signifies, also complete conformity or obedience to the law; for if there is any breach of the law, there is no righteousness. Δικαίωμα, as distinguished from this, signifies an act of righteousness, or some righteous deed. It is accordingly used for the ordinances of God, because they are his righteous appointments, and, perhaps, because they typically refer to the true “righteousness of God.” In a few places it may be an equivalent to δικαιοσύνη. Δικαίωσις is neither the one nor the other of the above. It is the act of being justified by this righteousness when on trial. Obedience to law is a different thing from being cleared, or acquitted, or justified, when tried by law. A man is justified on the ground of righteousness. There is the same difference between δικαιοσύνη

and *δικαίωσις*, that there is in English between righteousness and justification.

In support of his explanation of the phrase “the righteousness of God,” namely, that it is the justification which God bestows, Mr Stuart, in the following observations, shows a wonderful misapprehension of the doctrine of those who oppose the view of it which he adopts. On v. 22, he says, ‘What that *δικαιοσύνη θεου* is, which is ‘*χωρὶς νόμου*, the Apostle next proceeds explicitly ‘to develope. *Δικαιοσύνη δε . . . Ἰησοῦ χριστοῦ*, ‘*the justification which is of God by faith in Jesus Christ*. This explanation makes it clear ‘as the noon-day sun, that *δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ* in this ‘connexion, does not mean righteousness, or ‘the love of justice, as an *attribute* of God. ‘For in what possible sense can it be said, that ‘God’s righteousness or justice (as an essential ‘attribute) is by faith in Christ? Does he possess or exercise this attribute, or reveal it, by ‘faith in Christ? The answer is so plain, that ‘it cannot be mistaken.’—P. 157. Why does Mr Stuart labour to prove, that the phrase in question cannot here mean the justice of God, or a Divine attribute? Does any man suppose that it has such a sense here? We do not understand it of a Divine attribute; but of conformity to law by a Divine work. This righteousness is God’s righteousness, not because it is an

attribute of his nature, but because it is the righteousness that God has provided and effected for his people, through the obedience unto death of his own Son. The word *δικαιοσύνη*, indeed, always signifies righteousness; but it may mean either a personal attribute, or conformity to law. Does not Mr Stuart himself afterwards explain this phrase in this latter sense? Why then does he take it for granted, that if it does not signify justification, as he makes it here, it must signify a personal attribute of God? In chap. iv. 3, 6, and elsewhere, he admits that the word *δικαιοσύνη* cannot signify *justification*, but must be understood as denoting *righteousness*. 'To say,' he observes, (p. 177), '*was counted for justification*, would make no tolerable sense.' But nothing can be more obvious, than that the Apostle is, in the fourth chapter, treating of the same thing of which he is treating in this chapter, from the 21st verse. In all this connexion he is still speaking of this *δικαιοσύνη* (righteousness) in the same view. Having here spoken of God's righteousness, he goes on to show, that it was through this very righteousness that Abraham was justified. The justification of Abraham, instead of being an exception to what he had been teaching, as if it had been on the ground of Abraham's own obedience to law, is appealed to by the Apostle as a proof, as well

as an illustration and example, of justification by God's righteousness received by faith.

It makes nothing in favour of Mr Stuart that there may be instances in which the word *δικαιοσύνη* may be interpreted by the word justification, so as to make sense. There is no signification that may not be ascribed to any word upon this principle. A word may make sense in a passage, when it is explained in a meaning directly the opposite of its true meaning. This principle the reader may see fully established in the writings of Mr Carson. Several instances have been alleged from the Septuagint, in which *δικαιοσύνη* has the meaning of goodness, &c.; but there is no instance there in which the word may not have its true meaning, and it is only ignorance of the import of the phrase, "righteousness of God," that has induced writers to give the term a different meaning. For instance, there is nothing that at first sight appears more to countenance the idea that *δικαιοσύνη* expresses mercy than Psalm li. 14. How could David speak of righteousness, if God would deliver him from blood-guiltiness? He might well speak of goodness or compassion, but would not righteousness in God prevent him from being acquitted? Not so. The righteousness of God was what David looked to: the same righteousness that is more clearly revealed by Paul in this



epistle. And well might David speak of that righteousness, when by it he was cleared from all the guilt of his enormous wickedness.

The word, rendered "righteousness," Rom. i. 17, and in the verse before us, signifies both justice and righteousness; that is to say, conformity to the law. But while both of these expressions denote this conformity, there is an essential difference between them. Justice imports conformity to the law in executing its sentence, righteousness conformity in obeying its precepts, and this is the meaning of the word here. If these ideas be interchanged or confounded, as they often are, the whole scope of the Apostle's reasoning will be misunderstood.

In various parts of Scripture this phrase, "the righteousness of God," signifies either that holiness and rectitude of character which is the attribute of God, or that distributive justice by which he maintains the authority of his law; but where it refers to man's salvation, and is not merely a personal attribute of Deity, it signifies, as in the passage before us, the righteousness which, in conformity with his justice, God has appointed and provided for the salvation of sinners. This implies that the infinite justice of his character requires what is provided, and also that it is approved and accepted; for if it be God's righteousness it must be required, and

must be accepted by the justice of God. The righteousness of God, which is received by faith, denotes something that becomes the property of the believer. It cannot then be here the Divine attribute of justice, but the Divine work which God has wrought through his Son. This, therefore, determines the phrase in this place, as referring immediately not to the Divine attribute, but to the Divine work. The former never can become ours. This also is decisive against explaining the phrase as signifying a Divine method of justification. The righteousness of God is contrasted with the righteousness of man; and as Israel's own righteousness, which they went about to establish, was the righteousness of their works, not their method of justification, so God's righteousness, as opposed to this, Rom. x. 3, must be a righteousness wrought by Jehovah. As in 2 Cor. v. 21, the imputation of sin to Christ is contrasted with our becoming the righteousness of God in him, the latter cannot be a method of justification, but must intimate our becoming perfectly righteous by possessing Christ's righteousness, which is provided by God for us, and is perfectly commensurate with the Divine justice.

No explanation of the expression, "the righteousness of God," will at once suit the phrase and the situation in which it is here found, but

that which makes it that righteousness or obedience to the law, both in its penalty and requirements, which has been yielded to it by our Lord Jesus Christ. This is indeed the righteousness of God, for it has been provided by God, and from first to last has been effected by his Son Jesus Christ, who is the mighty God and the Father of eternity. Every thing that draws it off from this signification tends to darken the Scriptures, to cloud the apprehension of the truth in the children of God, and to corrupt the simplicity that is in Christ. To that righteousness is the eye of the believer for ever to be directed; on that righteousness must he rest; on that righteousness must he live; on that righteousness must he die; in that righteousness must he appear before the judgment-seat; in that righteousness must he stand for ever in the presence of a righteous God. "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord; my soul shall be joyful in my God: for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness." Isaiah, lxi. 10.

The righteousness of God provided for the salvation of sinners, like that salvation itself, differs essentially from all other righteousness that ever was or can be performed. It differs entirely from the righteousness of men and angels, for it is the righteousness not of crea-

tures but of the Creator. “ *I the Lord have created it,*” Isaiah, xlv. 8. It is a Divine and infinitely perfect righteousness, wrought out by Jehovah himself, which in the salvation of man preserves all his attributes inviolate. It is the righteousness of God as of the Godhead, without respect to distinction of personality, and strictly so in that sense in which the world is the work of God. The Father created it through the Son in the same way as by the Son he created the world ; and if the Father effected this righteousness because his Son effected it, then his Son must be one with himself. Peter, in his second epistle, chap. i. 1, according to the literal rendering of the passage, calls this righteousness the righteousness of Jesus Christ. “ Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us, in the righteousness of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ.” Most of the passages in which the righteousness of God is spoken of, refer to it as the righteousness of the Father, as in 2 Cor. v. 21, where the Father is distinguished from the Son ; but in this passage of Peter it is spoken of as the righteousness of the Son, where he is expressly called God. As it would be a palpable contradiction to assert that the work of creation could be executed by any creature, for he that built all things must

be God, so the righteousness of God could not be ascribed to Jesus Christ, unless he had been in the beginning "God," "with God," and "over all God, blessed for ever."

It was during his incarnation that the Son of God wrought out this righteousness. Before he came into the world he was not a member or subject of the kingdom of heaven, he was its Head. He then acted in the form of God; that is to say, as the Creator and Sovereign of the world, but afterwards in the form of a servant. Before that period he was perfectly holy, but that holiness could not be called obedience. It might rather be said that the law was conformed to him, than that he was conformed to the law. His holiness was exercised in making the law, and by it governing the world. But in his latter condition it was that law by which he himself was governed. His righteousness or obedience, then, was that of infinitely the most glorious person that could be subjected to the law. It was the righteousness of Emmanuel, God with us,—and this obedience of the Son of God in our nature conferred more honour on the law than the obedience of all intelligent creatures. He gave to every commandment of the law, and to every duty it enjoined, more honour than it had received of dishonour from

all the transgressions that have been in the world. When others obey the law they derive from that obedience honour to themselves, but on the occasion now referred to, it was the law that was honoured by the obedience of its sovereign. "The Lord," says the prophet, "is well pleased for his righteousness' sake; he will magnify the law, and make it honourable," Isaiah, xlii. 21.

The obedience of Jesus Christ magnified the law, because it was rendered by Divine appointment. He was chosen of God and anointed for this end. He was Jehovah, whom Jehovah sent. "Lo, I come, and I will dwell in the midst of thee, saith Jehovah,—and thou shalt know that Jehovah of Hosts hath sent me unto thee," Zech. ii. 10, 11. And when it is considered that the most astonishing work of God which can be conceived, is the incarnation of his Son, and his sojourn in the world, and that these wonders were performed in order to magnify the law,—it necessarily follows, that it is impossible to entertain too exalted an idea of the regard of Jehovah for the character of his holy law. In its AUTHOR, then, this righteousness is immeasurably distinguished from any other righteousness. And not only does it differ in its author, it differs also in its NATURE,

in its EXTENT, in its DURATION, and in its INFLUENCE, from all other righteousness that ever was or can be performed.

In its NATURE, this righteousness is twofold, fulfilling both the precept of the law, and its penalty. This by any creature the most exalted, is absolutely impossible. The fulfilment of the law in its precepts is all that could be required of creatures, in their original sinless condition. Such was at the beginning the state of all the angels, and of the first man. But the state of the Second Man, the Lord from heaven, when he came into the world, was essentially different. Christ was made under the law, but it was a BROKEN LAW, and consequently he was made under its curse. This is not only implied when it is said he was "made of a woman," who was a transgressor, but it is also expressly asserted that he was "made a curse for us," Gal. iii. 13. Justice, therefore, required that he should fulfil not only the precept, but also the penalty of the law—all that it threatens, as well as all that it commands.

A mere creature may obey the precept of the law, or suffer the penalty it denounces, but he cannot do both. If he be a transgressor, he may be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord; and God, whose vengeance he is suffering, being to him an

object of unmingled hatred and abhorrence, there can be no place for his repentance, his love, or obedience. But Jesus Christ was capable at the same moment of suffering at the hand of God, and of obeying the precept to love God. This was made manifest during the whole period of his incarnation, as well as by the memorable words which he uttered on the cross, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me!" We are here taught that the prediction by the Prophet, "Awake, O sword, against the man that is my fellow," was at that moment receiving its accomplishment. The sword of Divine justice, according to the prophetic declarations contained in the 22d Psalm, was then piercing his inmost soul, but still he addressed God as his God. From this it is evident, that while suffering under the full weight of his Father's wrath against the sin of his people, which he had taken upon him, all the feelings both of love and confidence, also expressed in the same Psalm, were at that moment in full exercise. His righteousness, therefore, or conformity to the law, was at once a conformity in two respects which could not have been exemplified throughout the whole universe but by himself.

By the sufferings of Jesus Christ, the execution of the law was complete ; while no punish-



ment which creatures could suffer can be thus designated. The law was fully executed when all the threatenings it contained were carried into effect. Those who are consigned to everlasting punishment will never be able to say, as our blessed Lord said on the cross, "It is finished." It is he only who could *put away sin* by the sacrifice of himself. By enduring the threatened punishment he fully satisfied justice. In token of having received a full discharge he came forth from the grave; and when he shall appear the second time, it shall be without sin—the sin which he had taken upon him, and all its effects, being for ever done away.

This fulfilment of the law, in its penalty, by the Son of God, is an end which cannot otherwise than through eternity be attained by the punishment of mere creatures. Sin, as committed against God, is an infinite evil, and requires an infinite punishment which cannot be borne in any limited time by those who are not capable of suffering punishment in an infinite degree. But the sufferings as well as the obedience in time of Him who is infinite, are equivalent to the eternal obedience and sufferings of those who are finite.

The doctrine, that sin is an infinite evil, and requires an infinite punishment, is objected to by the Socinians. They say, that if each sin that

we commit merits eternal death—that is, an infinite punishment—and since there are almost an infinite number of sins committed by men, then it must be said, that they merit an almost infinite number of punishments, and, consequently, that they cannot be expiated but by a like number of infinite satisfactions. It is replied, that the infinite value of the death of the Redeemer equals an infinite number of infinite punishments. For such is the nature of infinitude, that it admits of no degrees; it knows nothing of more or less; it cannot be measured; it cannot be augmented; so that ten thousand infinities are still only one infinite. And if Jesus Christ had suffered death as many times as the number of the redeemed, his satisfaction would not have been greater or more complete than by the one death which he suffered.

The death of the Son of God serves to magnify the law, by demonstrating the certainty of that eternal punishment, which, if broken, it denounces as its penalty. There are no limits to eternity; but when the Son of God bore what was equivalent to the eternal punishment of those who had sinned, he furnished a visible demonstration of the eternal punishment of sin.

But if nothing beyond the suffering of the penalty of the law had taken place, men would

only have been released from the punishment due to sin. If they were to obtain the reward of obedience, its precept must also be obeyed; and this was accomplished to the utmost by Jesus Christ. Every command it enjoins, every prohibition it contains, were in all respects fully honoured by him. In this manner, and by his sufferings, he fulfilled all righteousness. The righteousness, therefore, of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ is infinitely glorious. It is the righteousness of the lawgiver; and, being in its character twofold, it differs entirely in its NATURE from all other righteousness, and is of an order infinitely higher than ever was or can be exemplified by any or all the orders of intelligent creatures.

This righteousness differs also from all other righteousness in its EXTENT. Every creature is bound for himself to *all* that obedience to his Creator of which he is capable. He is under the obligation of loving God with all his heart, with all his soul, and with all his strength, and beyond this he cannot go. It is evident, therefore, that he can have no *superabounding* righteousness to be placed in the way of merit to the account of another. And, besides this, if he has sinned, he is bound to suffer for himself the *whole* penalty annexed to disobedience, no part of which, consequently, can be borne by

him to satisfy for the transgression of others. He is not in possession of a life at his own disposal to lay down for them; and, if he had laid it down, it being in that case forfeited for ever, he could not take it again. But the obedience of Jesus Christ, who is himself infinite, as well as the punishment he suffered, both in themselves of infinite value, are capable of being transferred in their effects without any diminution in their respective values. His life, too, was his own; and, as he suffered voluntarily, his obedience and sufferings, which were infinitely meritorious, might, with the greatest regard to justice, be imputed to as many of those of whose nature he partook, as to the Supreme Ruler shall seem good.

This righteousness likewise differs from all other righteousness in its DURATION. The righteousness of Adam or of angels could only be available while it continued to be performed. The law was binding on them in every instant of their existence. The moment, therefore, in which they transgressed, the advantages derived from all their previous obedience ceased. But the righteousness of God, brought in by his Son, is an "*everlasting* righteousness," Dan. ix. 24. It was performed within a limited period of time, but in its effects it can never terminate. "Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look

upon the earth beneath ; for the heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall wax old like a garment, and they that dwell therein shall die in like manner : but my salvation shall be *for ever*, and my righteousness shall *not be abolished*—my righteousness shall be *for ever*,” Is. li. 6, 8. “ Thy righteousness is an *everlasting* righteousness,” Ps. cxix. 142. “ By *one* offering he hath perfected *for ever* them that are sanctified,” Heb. x. 14. “ By his own blood he entered in *once* into the holy place, having obtained *eternal* redemption,” Heb. ix. 12. In respect to its duration, then, this righteousness reaches back to the period of the fall of man, and forward through the endless ages of eternity.

The paramount INFLUENCE of this righteousness is also gloriously conspicuous. It is the sole ground of the reconciliation of sinners with God, and of their justification before him, and also of intercession with him before the throne. “ If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ *the righteous*,” 1 John, ii. 1. It is the price paid for those new heavens and that new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness ; for that kingdom prepared for those who are clothed with righteousness—a kingdom commensurate with the dignity of him by whom it was provided. The paradise in which Adam

was placed at his creation was a paradise on earth. It might be *corrupted*, it might be *defiled*, and it might *fade away*, all of which accordingly took place. But the paradise which, in virtue of the righteousness of God, is provided, and to the hope of which, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, his people are begotten, is an inheritance which is *incorruptible* and *undefiled*, and that *fadeth not away*, reserved in *heaven*. This righteousness, then, is the ransom by which men are delivered from going down to the pit of everlasting destruction, and the price of heavenly and eternal glory. It is the fine linen, clean and white, in which the bride, the Lamb's wife, shall be arrayed, for "the fine linen is the righteousness of the saints." Man was made lower than the angels, but this righteousness exalts him above them. The redeemed people of God stand nearest to the throne, while the angels stand "round about" them. They enter heaven clothed with a righteousness infinitely better than that which angels possess, or in which Adam was created.

The idea which some appear to entertain, that the loss incurred by the fall is only compensated by what is obtained through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, is so far from being just, that the superabounding of the gain is unspeakable and immense. By the

disobedience of the first Adam, the righteousness with which he was originally invested was lost for himself and all his posterity, and the sin which he had committed was laid to their charge. By the obedience of the second Adam, not only the guilt of that one offence is removed, but pardon also is procured for all the personal transgressions of the children of God; while the righteousness, infinitely glorious, which he wrought, is placed to their account. By the entrance of sin and death, the inheritance on earth was forfeited. By the bringing in of the everlasting righteousness, their title to eternal glory in heaven is secured. *And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift: for the judgment was by one to condemnation; but the free gift is of many offences unto justification. For if, by one man's offence, death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteousness, shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ, ch. v. 16, 17.*

The evidence of the truth of Christianity might be rested on this one point—THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD provided for the salvation of sinners. How could such an idea as that of a vicarious everlasting righteousness, to meet all the demands of a BROKEN LAW, have ever entered into the conception of man or angels? If it could have suggested itself to the highest

created intelligence, and had the question been asked of all the host of heaven standing around the throne of God "on his right hand and his left," Who shall work this righteousness, what answer could have been given? What expedient for accomplishing it could have been proposed by one or all of them together! All must have stood silent before their Maker. If no one in heaven, nor on earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book with the seven seals, neither to look thereon, which was a subject of such bitter lamentation to the beloved disciple;

s no one, neither man nor angel, nor all the elect angels together, could have wrought the righteousness necessary for the justification of a sinner. The Lion of the tribe of Judah—the Lamb in the midst of the throne, who alone could open that book and loose the seals thereof, alone could "bring in everlasting righteousness," of which it may be truly said, that eye had not seen it, nor ear heard it, neither had it entered into the heart of man, till God revealed it by his Spirit.

*Without law.*—This righteousness is solely on the part of God, and is altogether independent of any obedience of man to the law, more or less. As the righteousness of God is the perfect *fulfilment* which the law demands, it is evidently impossible that any other righteousness or obe-



dience can be added to it or mixed with it. On the cross, Jesus Christ said, *It is finished*; that is, it is perfected. To exhibit this PERFECTI-ON,—this fulfilling of the law,—this grand consummation, is the great object of the Apostle, in the epistle to the Hebrews, chapter vi. 1. And Christ, it is said, Rom. x. 4, is the end or perfecting of the law, for righteousness to every one that believeth. In each of these passages, the word used for “perfection,”\* or “end,” is, in the original, of the same meaning as the word “finished,” used on the cross. And those persons are described as ignorant of God’s righteousness, who go about to establish their own righteousness, and have not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God. “Without law” then signifies, not without perfect obedience, but without any regard whatever to the obedience of man to the law. The obedience which the believer is enabled to render to the law, has no part in his justification, nor could it justify,

\* The import of this word *perfection* (Heb. vi. 1), which is the leading expression in the Epistle to the Hebrews, and the key to the whole of it, Mr Stuart has entirely misunderstood in his commentary on that Epistle, as he has misunderstood the meaning of the phrase, *the righteousness of God*, the leading expression in this epistle to the Romans. For the signification of the word *Perfection*, which so often occurs in the Epistle to the Hebrews, and is also misunderstood by the other commentators, I refer to “Evidences,” vol. i. p. 373.

being always imperfect. The Apostle had, in the foregoing verse, affirmed, that by his obedience to the law no man could be justified; he establishes the same truth in the 28th verse of this chapter, and in the 5th verse of the 4th chapter, in a manner so explicit, as to place his meaning beyond all question. In the same sense he declares, Gal. iii. 21, that "if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law." And again he affirms, Gal. ii. 21, "If righteousness come by the law, then is Christ dead in vain." It is needless here to dispute, as many do, about what law the Apostle alludes to, whether moral or ceremonial. It is to the law of God, whether written or unwritten, whatever is sanctioned by his authority, whether ceremonial or moral, all of which have been fulfilled by the righteousness of God. Matt. iii. 15.

The righteousness of God is now *manifested*; that is, clearly discovered, or made fully evident. It was darkly revealed in the shadows of the law, and more clearly in the writings of the prophets, but now it is revealed in its accomplishment. It was manifested in the life and death of Jesus Christ, and was, by his resurrection from the dead, openly declared on the part of God. By him, who was God manifest in the flesh, it was wrought out while he was on

earth. He fulfilled all righteousness; not one jot of the law, either in its precepts or threatenings, passed from it, but all was accomplished; and of this righteousness the Holy Spirit, when he came, was to convince the world, John, xvi. 8.

This righteousness is *manifested* in the doctrine of the Apostles. Besides being introduced so frequently in this epistle to the Romans, it is often referred to and exhibited in the other apostolical epistles. To the Apostles was committed the ministration of the new dispensation, characterised as the “ministration of *righteousness*,” 2 Cor. iii. 9. By that dispensation, and not by the law, *righteousness* is come, Gal. ii. 21. In writing to the Philippians, Paul calls it “the *righteousness which is of God by faith* ;” and contrasts it with his own righteousness which is of the law, Phil. iii. 9. Peter addresses his second epistle to those who had obtained precious faith in the *righteousness of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ*, 2 Peter, i. 1. In one word, besides expressly naming it in many places under the designation of righteousness, the grand theme of the writings of the Apostles, as well as of their preaching, was the obedience and sufferings even unto death of the Lord Jesus Christ, who, they declared, is “the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth ;”

while they exposed the error of those who went about to establish their own righteousness, and did not submit themselves to *the righteousness of God*.

*Being witnessed by the law.*—In the first part of this verse, “without law,” where the article is wanting, signifies law indefinitely—whatever has been delivered to man by God as his law, and in whatever way; but here, with the article, it refers to the five books of Moses, thus distinguished from the writings of the Prophets, according to the usual division of the Old Testament Scriptures, and adopted by our Lord, Luke, xxiv. 44. This righteousness was obscurely testified in the first promise, respecting the bruising of the serpent’s head. It was expressly named in the declaration of the manner of Abraham’s justification, where it is recorded that he believed in the Lord, and he counted it to him for *righteousness*, Gen. xv. 6. And also in the covenant which God made with him, of which the sign, that is, circumcision, was a seal or pledge of the righteousness which is by faith; and when it was promised that the blessing of Abraham, which is this righteousness, was to come on all nations, Gen. xii. 3. It was intimated in the writings of Moses, in every declaration of the forgiveness of sin, and every call to repentance. All the declarations

of mercy that are to be found in the law of Moses belong to the Gospel. They are all founded on the Messiah and his *righteousness*, and are made in consequence of God's purpose to send his Son in the fulness of time into the world, and of the first promise respecting the seed of the woman.

The righteousness of God was witnessed not only in all the declarations of mercy and calls to repentance, but also by the whole economy of the law of which Moses was the Mediator. Abraham was chosen, his posterity collected into a nation, and a country appropriated to them, that from the midst of them, according to his promise, God might raise up a prophet, who, like unto Moses, was to be a lawgiver and mediator, to whom, turning from Moses, they should listen so soon as he appeared, Deut. xviii. 15, 19. The law of everlasting obligation was given to that nation, and renewed after it had been broken by them, and then solemnly deposited in the ark of the testimony, in token that it should be preserved entire, and in due time fulfilled by him of whom the ark was a type. On that occasion the Lord passed before Moses, and proclaimed "the Lord, the Lord God merciful and gracious, long suffering and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, and trans-

gression, and sin." And that this should be done in consistency with the holiness and justice of God, is intimated in the clause subjoined—the sinner shall be forgiven, but sin shall not go unpunished. After the first tables had been broken, it was evident from that transaction, that man, by the keeping of the law, could not be justified. A trial had been made of his obedience to that law which had been uttered by the voice of God and written with his finger, and had failed. But in the renewal of the tables, accompanied with a proclamation of the mercy of God, and their being solemnly deposited in the ark, covered with the mercy-seat, intimation was given of the fulfilment of that law *which had been broken*, or, in other words, that a righteousness adequate to all its demands, which could not be yielded by man, should be provided by God. And this solemn transaction, and the purposed fulfilment of its import, was, in the 40th Psalm, prophetically declared of him who was destined to bring in this righteousness, when he himself announces his coming to do his Father's will. "I delight to do thy will, O my God; yea, thy law is within my heart. I have preached *righteousness* in the great congregation: lo, I have not refrained my lips, O Lord, thou knowest. I have not hid *thy righteousness* within my heart."

The sacrifices offered by the Patriarchs, and the whole of the ceremonial law in all its typical ordinances and observances, bear their direct though shadowy testimony, to the righteousness of God, of which Noah was alike a preacher and an heir. 2 Peter, ii. 5. Heb. xi. 7.

The righteousness of God *was witnessed by the Prophets*. Of their testimonies to it the following are a few examples from the Psalms.—“ Deliver me from blood-guiltiness, O God, thou God of my salvation; and my tongue shall sing aloud of *thy righteousness*,” Psalm li. 14. “ My mouth shall show forth *thy righteousness* and thy salvation all the day; for I know not the numbers thereof. I will go in the strength of the Lord God; I will make mention of *thy righteousness*, even of thine only. *Thy righteousness*, also, O God, is very high. My tongue also shall talk of *thy righteousness* all the day long,” Psalm lxxi. 15, 19, 24. “ Mercy and truth are met together; *righteousness* and peace have kissed each other. Truth shall spring out of the earth; and righteousness shall look down from heaven. *Righteousness* shall go before him, and shall set us in the way of his steps,” Psalm lxxxv. 10, 13. “ In thy name shall they rejoice all the day; and in *thy righteousness* shall they be exalted,” Psalm lxxxix. 16. “ *Thy righteousness* is an everlasting righteousness,” Psalm cxix.

142. "They shall abundantly utter the memory of thy great goodness, and shall sing of *thy righteousness*," Psalm cxlv. 7.

The *righteousness* of the Messiah, as connected with *salvation*, is the constant theme of the Prophets, especially of Isaiah. "The Lord is well pleased for his *righteousness*' sake ; he will magnify the law, and make it honourable," Isa. xlii. 21. "Drop down, ye heavens, from above, and let the skies pour down *righteousness*; let the earth open, and let them bring forth salvation, and let *righteousness* spring up together ; I the Lord have created it," Isa. xlv. 8. The heavens were to drop this righteousness, and the skies were to pour it down, while men's hearts, barren like 'the earth without rain, were to be opened to receive it by faith, having no part in doing anything to procure the gift. "Surely, shall one say, in the Lord have I *righteousness* and strength: In the Lord shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory," Isa. xlv. 24, 25. "I bring near *my righteousness* ; it shall not be far off, and my salvation shall not tarry ; and I will place salvation in Zion for Israel my glory," Isa. xlvi. 13. "*My righteousness* is near ; my salvation is gone forth—my salvation shall be for ever, and *my righteousness* shall not be abolished. Harken unto me, ye that know *righteousness*," Isa. li. 5, 7. "By



his knowledge shall my *righteous* servant justify many," Isa. liii. 11. "This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord; and their *righteousness* is of me, saith the Lord," Isa. liv. 17. "Thus saith the Lord, Keep ye judgment, and do justice: for my salvation is near to come, and *my righteousness* to be revealed," Isa. lvi. 1. "For as the earth bringeth forth her bud, and as the garden causeth the things that are sown in it to spring forth; so the Lord God will cause *righteousness* and praise to spring forth before all the nations," Isa. lxi. 11. "For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the *righteousness* thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth. And the Gentiles shall see *thy righteousness*, and all kings thy glory," Isa. lxii. 1, 2.

"Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a *righteous Branch*, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely; and this is his name whereby he shall be called, JEHOVAH OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS," Jer. xxiii. 5. "Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people, and upon the holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring

in *everlasting righteousness*," Daniel, ix. 24. "It is time to seek the Lord, till he come and rain *righteousness* upon you," Hosea, x. 12. To Balaam, who beheld the Saviour at a distance, he appeared as a *star*; while to Malachi, the last of the prophets, on his nearer approach, he appeared as the *Sun*. "But unto you that fear my name shall the *Sun of Righteousness* arise with healing in his wings;" Mal. iv. 2.

V. 22.—*Even the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe.*

This righteousness of God, to which the law and the prophets render their testimony, and which is now manifested in the gospel, whereby man is justified, is not imputed to him on account of any work of his own in obedience to the law, but is received, as the Apostle had already declared, in the 17th verse of chapter first, by faith alone. Faith is no part of that righteousness; but it is through faith that it is received, and becomes available for salvation. Faith is the belief of the Divine testimony concerning that righteousness, and trust in him who is the author of it. Faith perceives and acknowledges the excellency and suitableness of God's righteousness, and cordially embraces it. "Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of thing not seen;" because, though we do not yet possess what God has promised, and do not

yet see it accomplished in ourselves, we see it accomplished in Jesus Christ, in whom what we hope for really exists. In respect to those promises which are not yet fulfilled, believers are now in the same situation as the fathers were of old respecting the unaccomplished promises in their day. Like them, they see these promises afar off, are persuaded of them, and embrace them. Believers thus flee to Christ and his righteousness, as the refuge set before them in the gospel. By faith they receive him as their surety, and place their trust in him, as representing them on the cross, in his death, and in his resurrection.

Before we can have a right to any thing in Christ, we must be *one* with him; we must be joined with him as our head, being dead to the law and married to him; and as this union is accomplished only through faith, his righteousness, which we receive, and which becomes ours in this way, is therefore called the righteousness which is *by faith of Jesus Christ*, Rom. iii. 22; *the righteousness of faith*, Rom. iv. 11, 13; and *the righteousness which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith*, Phil. iii. 9. It is called the righteousness of faith, because faith is the only instrument which God is pleased to make use of in applying his righteousness. It is not called the righteousness

of any other grace, but of faith ; we never read of the righteousness of repentance, of humility, of meekness, or of charity. These are of great price in the sight of God, but they have no office in justifying a sinner. This belongs solely to faith ; for to him that worketh not but believeth, is righteousness imputed ; and faith is the gift of God.

This righteousness is *unto all*.—This means that it is set before all, and published to all. *Upon all*, is connected with the words that follow, viz. them that believe. While it is published *to all*, it is actually *upon* believers. It is not put *into* them, as their sanctification is wrought in the soul by the Holy Spirit ; but it is placed *upon* them as a robe :—“ He hath covered me with the robe of *righteousness*,” Isa. lxi. 10. It is the white raiment given by Jesus Christ to them who hear his voice, that they may be clothed, and that the shame of their nakedness may not appear, Rev. iii. 18. It is the fine linen clean and white with which the bride, the Lamb’s wife, is arrayed ; for the fine linen is the *righteousness* of saints, Rev. xix. 8. Thus, Jesus Christ is of God made unto his people righteousness, 1 Cor. i. 30.

*Righteousness*.—“ This, doubtless, is meant,” says Archbishop Leighton, in his sermon on 1 Cor. i. 30, “ of the righteousness by which

we are justified before God ; and he is *made this to us*, applied by faith : *His righteousness becomes ours*. That exchange made, our sins are laid over upon him, and his obedience put upon us. This, the great glad tidings, that we are made righteous by Christ : It is not a righteousness wrought by us, but given to us, and put upon us. This carnal reason cannot apprehend, and, being proud, therefore rejects and argues against it ; and says, how can this thing be ? But faith closes with it, and rejoices in it ; without either doing or suffering, the sinner is acquitted and justified, and stands as guiltless of breach, yea, as having fulfilled the whole law. And happy they that thus fasten upon this righteousness—they may lift up their faces with gladness and boldness before God : whereas the most industrious self-saving justiciary, though in other men's eyes and his own possibly for the present, he makes a glistening show, yet, when he shall come to be examined of God, and tried according to the law, he shall be covered with shame, and confounded in his folly and guiltiness. But faith triumphs over self-unworthiness, and sin, and death, and the law ; shrouding the soul under the mantle of Jesus Christ ; and there it is safe. All accusations fall off, having no where to fasten, unless some blemish could be found in that righteousness in

which faith hath wrapt itself. This is the very spring of solid peace, and fills the soul with peace and joy. But still men would have something within themselves to make out the matter, as if this robe needed any such piecing, and, not finding what they desire, thence disquiet and unsettlement of mind arises. True it is that faith purifies the heart and works holiness, and all graces flow from it: But in this work of justifying the sinner it is alone, and cannot admit of any mixture.”

V. 23.—(*For there is no difference; for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.*)

The Apostle introduces this parenthesis to preclude the supposition that the receiving of the righteousness of God is not indispensably necessary to *every individual* of the human race in order to his salvation, and lest it should be imagined that there is any difference in the way in which, or on account of which, it is received. As there is no difference between Jews and Gentiles with respect to their character as sinners, so there is no difference with respect to them as to the receiving of God's righteousness—no difference either as to sin or salvation—all of them are guilty, and salvation through faith is published to them all. “For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek; for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him.”

Rom. x. 12. Before men receive this righteousness, they are all under the curse of the broken law, and in a state of condemnation. Whatever distinction there may be among them otherwise, whether moral in their conduct, good and useful members of society, discharging respectably and decently the external duties of that situation in which they are placed—or whether they be immoral in their lives, entirely abandoned to every vice, they all stand equally in need of this righteousness—it is equally preached to them all—it is in the same manner bestowed upon all who believe. The reason of this is, that *all have sinned*—all, without one exception, as had been proved, are “under sin.”

The Apostle adds, as a consequence of this, that they *have come short of the glory of God*. They have come short, as in running a race, having now lost all strength (Rom. v. 6) and ability in themselves to glorify God, and to attain to the possession and enjoyment of his glory. In the second chapter, the Apostle, in announcing the terms of the law, had declared that the way to obtain eternal life was in seeking for glory by patient continuance in well-doing, and that to those who work good, honour and peace would be awarded. In other words, “if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments;” but he had afterwards proved that in this way it

was altogether unattainable, since by the deeds of the law no flesh shall be justified. In this place he more briefly repeats the same truth, that all men, without exception, being sinners, have come short of this glory, while he is pointing out the way in which, through the atonement of the Saviour, and faith in that atonement, believers may now "rejoice in hope of the glory of God." All men, on the ground of their obedience to law, come short of glorifying God, for to glorify God is the whole of the law,—even the second table is to be obeyed to glorify God, who requires it. If they come short of obeying the law, they have, as sinners, come short of that glory, and honour, and immortality, in his presence, which can only be obtained through the "salvation which is in Christ Jesus, with eternal glory."—2 Tim. ii. 10.

*V. 24.—Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.*

*Justified.*—Justification stands opposed both to accusation and condemnation. "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth; who is he that condemneth?" "Them whom God effectually calleth, he also freely justifieth; not by infusing righteousness into them," as is well expressed in the Westminster Confession of Faith, "but by



pardoning their sins, and by accounting and accepting their persons as righteous,—not for any thing wrought in them, or done by them, but for Christ's sake alone; not by imputing faith itself, the act of believing, or any other evangelical obedience, to them as their righteousness; but by imputing the obedience and satisfaction of Christ unto them, they receiving and resting on him and his righteousness by faith; which faith they have not of themselves, it is the gift of God." Or, according to Dr Owen, on justification, "This imputation is an act of God, *ex mera gratia*, of his mere love and grace, whereby, on the consideration of the mediation of Christ, he makes an effectual grant and donation of a true, real, perfect righteousness,—even that of Christ himself, unto all that do believe, and accounting it as theirs, on his own gracious act, both absolves them from sin and granteth them right and title unto eternal life." The Helvetic Confession of Faith, adopted by the church at Geneva, in 1536, and by all the evangelical churches in Switzerland 30 years afterwards, explains justification as follows: "The word to justify, signifies, in the writings of the Apostle St Paul, when he speaks of justification, to pardon sins, to absolve from guilt and punishment, to receive into grace, and to declare righteous. *The righteousness of Jesus*

*Christ is imputed to believers.*—Our Saviour is then charged with the sins of the world, he has taken them away, he has satisfied Divine justice. It is then only on account of Jesus Christ dead and risen, that God, pacified towards us, does not impute to us our sins, but that he imputes to us the righteousness of his Son, as if it were ours; so that, thenceforward, we are not only cleansed from our sins, but besides, clothed with the righteousness of Christ, and by it absolved from the punishment of sins, from death, or from condemnation, accounted righteous, and heirs of eternal life. Thus, to speak properly, it is God only who justifies us, and he justifies us solely for the sake of Jesus Christ, not imputing to us our sins, but imputing to us the righteousness of Christ.”

In the Homily of the Church of England, on “justification,” it is said—“Justification is not the office of man, but of God; for man cannot make himself righteous by his own works, neither in part nor in whole; for that were the greatest arrogancy and presumption of man that antichrist could set up against God, to affirm that a man might by his own works take away and purge his own sins, and so justify himself. But justification is the office of God only, and is not a thing which we render unto him, but which we receive of him; not which we give to

him, but which we take of him by his free mercy, and by the only merits of his most dearly beloved Son, our only Redeemer, Saviour, and Justifier, Jesus Christ: So that the true understanding of this doctrine, we be justified freely by faith without works, or that we be justified by Christ only, is not that this our own act to believe in Christ, or this our faith in Christ which is within us doth justify us, and deserve our justification unto us (for that were to count ourselves to be justified by some act or virtue that is within ourselves), but the true understanding and meaning thereof is, that although we hear God's word, and believe it, although we have faith, hope, charity, repentance, dread, and fear of God within us, do never so many works thereunto; yet we must renounce the merit of all our said virtues, of faith, hope, charity, and all other virtues, which we either have done, shall do, or can do, as things that must be far too weak, and insufficient, and imperfect to deserve remission of our sins and our justification; and therefore we must trust only in God's mercy, and that sacrifice which our High Priest and Saviour Jesus Christ, the Son of God, once offered for us on the cross." Again, "This doctrine all old and ancient authors of Christ's Church do approve. This doctrine adorneth and setteth forth the glory of Christ,

and beateth down the glory of man; this whosoever denieth, *is not to be accounted for a Christian man*, nor for a setter forth of Christ's glory, but for an adversary of Christ and his gospel, and for a setter forth of man's vain glory." The above quotations are not given in the way of authority, but as expressing the truth, and evincing the unanimity of believers of different communions on this all-important point.

There is no "condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." The moment a sinner is united to him the sentence of condemnation under which he formerly lay, is taken off, and a sentence of acquittal and perfect righteousness is pronounced by God. Justification, then, is at once complete—in the imputation of a perfect righteousness, the actual pardon of all past sins, the virtual pardon of future sins, and the grant and title to the heavenly inheritance. The believer is found in Christ *having* the righteousness which is of God, Phil. iii. 9. "Surely, shall one say, in the Lord *have I righteousness,*" Isa. xlv. 24. He is *complete* in Christ, Col. ii. 10, who, by one offering, hath for ever *perfect-ed* him, Heb. x. 14. In him the law has been fulfilled; his sin has been made Christ's, and the righteousness which God requireth by the law has been made his. "He hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be

made the righteousness of God in him," 2 Cor. v. 21. On this Chrysostom remarks, "What word, what speech is this? what mind can comprehend or express it! For he saith, He made him who was righteous to be made a sinner, that he might make sinners righteous. Nor yet doth he say so neither, but that which is far more sublime and excellent. For he speaks not of an inclination or affection, but expresseth the quality itself. For he says not, he made him a sinner, but sin, that we might be made not merely righteous, but righteousness—and that the righteousness of God."\*

After the Lord Jesus Christ condescended to take on him our sins, it would not have been just for him not to account for them; his responsibility for them was then the same as if he had himself sinned. On this proceeded God's

\* To explain Christ's being made *sin* in this passage with Dr Macknight, Mr Stuart, and others, as signifying his being made a *sin-offering*, ought to be most strenuously rejected. It takes away the contrast, and obscures one of the strongest expressions of the vicarious nature of Christ's sufferings that is to be found in the Bible. In the same way, when it is said (Heb. ix. 28), He shall "appear the second time without sin unto salvation," the true meaning of the passage is lost by changing the phrase, "without sin," as in the common version, to "without a sin-offering," according to Mr Stuart. When Jesus Christ first appeared, he came covered with the sin which was imputed to him; but when he shall come the second time, not the smallest remainder of it shall be either upon him or his people.

treatment of him in hiding his face from him, while in the act of paying the debt. "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us; that is, being *cursed*, as the Apostle explains it. As the sins of Israel were all laid on the head of the scape-goat, so "the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." "How could he die," says Charnock, "if he was not a reputed sinner? Had he not first had a relation to our sin, he could not in justice have undergone our punishment. He must, in the order of justice, be supposed a sinner really, or by imputation. Really he was not; by imputation, then, he was." On the whole, believers are accounted and pronounced righteous by God; and if so accounted by him, it is and must be true in fact, that they are *righteous*, for righteousness is imputed to them; that is, it is placed to their account—made over to them—really theirs—and, therefore, without the smallest deviation from truth or fact—which is impossible in the great Judge—he will, from his throne of judgment in the last day, declare that they are "*righteous*," Matt. xxv. 37, and 46.

*Freely by his grace.*—The expression is redoubled to show that all is of God, and that nothing in this act of justification belongs to, or proceeds from man. It is perfectly gratuitous

on the part of God, both as to the mode of its conveyance, and the motive on which it is vouchsafed. Nothing being required of man in order to his justification, in the way of price or satisfaction, and there being no prerequisite or preparatory dispositions to merit it at the hand of God, believers are therefore said to be justified by his *grace*, which excludes on their part both price and merit. And lest it should be imagined that grace does not proceed in its *operation*, as well as in the *choice* of its objects, consistently with its character of sovereign and unmerited goodness, the Apostle adds the word *freely*; that is, without cause or motive on the part of man. The word here rendered "freely" is the same as that used by our Lord, when he says, they hated me *without a cause*, John xv. 25. "Freely (gratuitously) ye have received, freely give," Matt. x. 8; 2 Cor. xi. 7; 2 Thes. iii. 8: "For nought," (gratis), Rev. xxi. 6, and xxii. 17; or without price, as Isaiah. lv. 1. This term "freely," in the most absolute manner excludes all consideration of any thing in man as the cause or condition in his justification. The means by which it is received is faith; and, in the commencement of the next chapter, faith is placed in opposition to all works whatever, and in verse 16th of that chapter it is said,

“Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace.” Faith is the constituted medium through which man receives “the gift of righteousness;” because, as Paul there affirms, it interferes not with the gratuitous nature of the gift. It is impossible to express more strongly than in this place, that justification is bestowed without the smallest regard to any thing done by man. There can be no pretence left that it comes in consequence of repentance, or any thing good either existing or foreseen in him. God “justifieth the *ungodly*,” Rom. iv. 5. It comes, then, solely by grace—free, unmerited favour. “And if by grace, then it is no more of works; otherwise grace is no more grace,” Rom. xi. 6. This is said respecting the election of believers to eternal life, and equally holds, according to the passage before us, in respect to their justification. “How does Paul,” says Luther, in answer to Erasmus, “in one word confound in one mass all the assertors of every specious and of every degree of merit! All are justified freely, and without the works of the law. He who affirms the justification of all men who are justified to be perfectly free and gratuitous, leaves no place for works, merits, or preparations of any kind—no place for works either of condignity or congruity; and



thus, at one blow, he demolishes both the Pelagians, with their complete merits, and our Sophists, with their petty performances."

*Through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.*—The great blessing of justification is described above as proceeding from the free grace of God, which is the fountain from whence floweth pardon, righteousness, and salvation, excluding all works, whether before or after faith. Here it is referred to the outward or impulsive cause, or the meritorious price provided by God, and that is the redemption which is in Christ Jesus. For though it comes freely to man, yet it is through the redemption or purchase of the Son of God.

The word *redemption* signifies, in general, a deliverance effected by a *price*, and sometimes a deliverance by *power*. In this last sense it is said, "Now these are thy servants, and thy people, whom thou hast redeemed by thy great power," Neh. i. 10. The resurrection of the body by an act of Divine power is called a redemption, Rom. viii. 23. But, more generally, redemption signifies in Scripture deliverance by *price*, as that of slaves, or prisoners, or persons condemned, when they are delivered from slavery, captivity, or death, by means of a ransom. In this last acceptation the word is here used. Man had rebelled against God, and incurred the just condemnation of his law,

but God by his free grace, and of infinite compassion, hath substituted his own Son in the place of the guilty, and transferred from them to him the obligation of their punishment. He hath made him to suffer for their sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring them to himself. His own self bare their sins in his own body on the tree, 1 Peter iii. 18; ii. 24. In this manner the Scriptures often represent the death or blood of Jesus Christ as the ransom price. He came to give his life a ransom for many, Matt. xx. 28; 1 Cor. vi. 20. "Ye were not *redeemed* with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation, received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ." 1 Peter, i. 18. "Thou wast slain, and hast *redeemed* us to God by thy blood," Rev. v. 9. "Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the Beloved; in whom we have *redemption* through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace, wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence," Eph. i. 7; Col. i. 14. If, then, we are accounted righteous before God, because redeemed with a price paid by another, we receive

what is not in ourselves, or in any measure from ourselves.

The Socinian talks of redemption as an act merely of God's power, and of Christ as offering his sacrifice by presenting himself in heaven after his death. But this is not redemption. There is not only a price paid, but that price is expressly stated. "In whom we have redemption *through his blood*." His blood, then, is the price by which we have redemption, "even the forgiveness of sins." Col. i. 14. The same thing that is redemption, is in another point of view forgiveness, yet these two things in human transactions are incompatible. Where there is forgiveness there is no price or redemption; where there is redemption there is no forgiveness. But in the salvation of the Gospel there is both. There is a price, but as God himself has paid the price, it is forgiveness with respect to man as much as if there had been no price. How wonderful is the wisdom of God manifested in the Gospel! Grace and justice, mercy and punishment, are both seen in the utmost harmony.

Many persons judge that the object of the Apostle in this epistle, is merely to establish gratuitous justification, and seem to think that nothing can be essentially wrong in the views of those who speak of gratuitous salvation. Yet

this may be most explicitly confessed, and the distinguishing features of the Gospel overlooked or even denied. Arians do not deny a gratuitous salvation. They contend that salvation is gratuitous, and boast that they are the only persons who can consistently hold this doctrine. Calvinists, they say, have not a God of mercy; he gives nothing without a price. Their God, they boast, is a God of mercy, for he pardons without any ransom. Now the glory of the Gospel is, that *grace reigns through righteousness*. Salvation is of grace; but this grace comes to us in a way of righteousness. It is grace to us, but it was brought about in such a way that all our debt was paid. This exhibits God as just as well as merciful. Just in requiring full compensation to justice, and merciful because it was he, and not the sinner who provided the ransom. He who is saved is saved without an injury to justice. Salvation is in one point of view forgiveness, but in another it is redemption

It has been objected that though it is here said that God justifies man freely by his grace, yet, as a price has been paid for it, this takes away from the freeness of the gift. But he who pays the ransom is one and the same, as has just been observed, with him who justifies, so that the freeness of the blessing on the part of

God is not in the smallest degree diminished. This proves that the doctrine of a free justification, through an atonement, rests entirely on the doctrine of the Deity of Jesus Christ; on which also rests the transfer of his righteousness to the guilty; for, as has already been shown, no mere creature can have the least particle of *merit* to transfer to another. Every creature is bound for himself to the fulfilment of the whole law. After doing all that is possible for him, in the way of obedience, he must confess himself to be an unprofitable servant, Luke xvii. 10.

This redemption is *in, or by Christ Jesus*.—It is wholly in him and solely accomplished by him. Through the period of his ministry on earth, his disciples who followed him were not aware of the work he was accomplishing. During his agony in the garden they were asleep. When seized by his persecutors to be put to death, they all forsook him and fled. “Behold,” says he, “the hour cometh, yea is now come, that ye shall be scattered every man to his own, and shall leave me alone.” No one participated or bore any share with him in that great work, which according to his appeal to his Father, on which he founded the petitions he offered for himself and his people, he alone had consummated; “I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.”

*V. 25.*—*Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God.*

*Set forth.*—The word means to exhibit to public view—to place before the eyes of men; 1 Pet. i. 20. *Propitiation.*—Some understand this of a propitiatory, as signifying the mercy-seat, as the same word is translated, Heb. ix. 5—some as a propitiatory sacrifice, which is to be preferred. But it comes to the same thing, if, according to our translation, it be rendered propitiation, considering the word to be the adjective taken substantively. And this is countenanced by 1 John, ii. 2, though a different word is there used, but of the same derivation. By a propitiation is meant that which appeaseth the wrath of God for sins, and obtains his favour. And this propitiation of Christ was typified, first, in the propitiatory sacrifices whose blood was shed, and by the mercy-seat, which was called the propitiatory, because it covered the ark in which was the law, and on it and before it the blood of the sacrifices was sprinkled by the High Priest. Jesus Christ is a propitiation to the sinner, *through faith in his blood*; that is, when he believes that his death is a sacrifice which atones for sin. *To declare his righteousness, or in order to a manifestation of his righteousness.* *Righteousness.*—Some translate this word

*faithfulness or veracity, some goodness, some holiness, some pardoning mercy.* But all are wrong. It is righteousness. *For the remission.*—Rather on account of, with respect to. The death of Jesus Christ for the sins of believers under the old dispensation, manifested God's righteousness for pardoning or remitting their sins *that are past*, done before, or formerly committed. *Forbearance of God.*—It was God's forbearance that passed by the sins of his people before the death of Christ, till which time his justice had received no satisfaction.

In the end of the preceding verse, the Apostle had said, that believers are redeemed through Jesus Christ, that it was he who laid down the price of their redemption. This meritorious cause of it he further explains here; God hath in his own time set him forth, brought him forward, and exhibited him to be a propitiatory sacrifice to make satisfaction to his justice. God is thus pacified towards believers in Jesus Christ, and made propitious, the demands of his justice being satisfied, and every obstruction to the exercise of his mercy towards them removed. This propitiation was made by blood, by which is to be understood all the sufferings of Christ, and, above all, his death, by which they were consummated. And this becomes a propitiation to us by faith in his blood—by our resting on it as a sufficient

answer to all accusations against us of the law of God, which, in the punishment of death, it demanded for sin, for "without shedding of blood is no remission."

God hath not only set forth his Son as a propitiatory sacrifice through faith in his blood, but also has done this to declare, or for the manifestation of, his righteousness. No sufficient atonement previous to that event was made for sins. Yet, through the forbearance of God, he did not immediately proceed to punish them, but had respect to the everlasting righteousness to be in the fulness of time brought in by his Son, by which sins were to be expiated. This verse beautifully points out the ground on which Old Testament saints were admitted into heaven before the death of Christ.

The same truth is declared in the Epistle to the Hebrews, ix. 15, where the Apostle refers to the inefficacy of the legal sacrifices to take away sins, and speaks of the blood of Jesus, by which he entered into the holy place, and obtained eternal redemption for his people. "And for this cause he is the Mediator of the New Testament, that, by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called (literally, the called, namely, under that dispensation) might receive the promise of eternal inheritance." All



the people on whom the blood of the sacrifices was sprinkled, were sanctified to the purifying of the flesh, but they among them who were efficaciously called, and offered the sacrifices in faith of the promise of God, received a real remission of their sins. They were, like Noah, heirs of the righteousness which is by faith, and consequently partakers in its benefits. To the same purpose, the Apostle speaks towards the end of that epistle, of "the spirits of just men made *perfect*," Heb. xii. 23. They had entered heaven on the pledge of that righteousness which was afterwards to be "brought in;" but until ttha took place, their title to heavenly glory had not been completed or perfected.\* Hence the declaration at the end of the eleventh chapter of that Epistle, "that they without us should not be made perfect," that is, without the introduction of that righteousness in the days of the gospel, the ministration of which was committed to the Apostles, 2 Cor. iii. 8.

*V. 26.—To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness; that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.*

For this purpose also God hath set forth his Son as a propitiatory sacrifice at this time, under

\* Mr Stuart's explanation is, "exalted to a state of final reward." This is not the truth here declared. The other commentators equally mistake the meaning, explaining it to signify exalted to a state of holiness and felicity.

the gospel dispensation, in order to make manifest his righteousness. He was always just in forgiving sin, but now the ground on which he forgives it is manifested, which vindicates his justice in doing so. The word here rendered *just*, is variously translated by those who do not understand God's plan of salvation. Some make it to signify benevolent, kind, merciful, &c.; but it has here its own proper meaning, which it never deserts. God is *just*; he acts according to strict justice, as becometh his character, while he justifies, accounts, and treats as perfectly righteous all who believe in Jesus, who are thus one with him, and consequently have his righteousness imputed to them. In all this we see the accomplishment of that prediction, "Mercy and truth are met together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other, truth shall spring out of the earth, and righteousness shall look down from heaven; yea, the Lord shall give that which is good, and our land shall yield her increase. Righteousness shall go before him, and shall set us in the way of his steps," Psalm, lxxxv. 10.

From the last two verses we learn that in the continuance of the legal dispensation, notwithstanding the sins of men, and also in the preservation of the nations, God had suspended or mitigated the immediate effects of his justice.

For if he had not acted in this manner, he would at once have put an end to that dispensation and to the economy of his providence with respect to the other nations, in destroying both them and the people of Israel. During all that time which preceded the coming of his Son, he appeared to have forgotten the merited punishment of men's sins, and all the world remained under the shadow of his forbearance. But when Jesus Christ came, God did two things: the first was to continue no longer an economy of patience, or of an apparent forgetfulness of sin, but to bring in everlasting righteousness, by which he bestowed a true justification, which the law, whether written or natural, could not do, as it left men under guilt; but Jesus Christ has brought the true grace of God. The second thing which God has done, is to manifest his avenging justice by the shedding of the blood of his Son upon the cross. And thus he now appears to be just in himself as the real avenger of sins, and nevertheless, at the same time, the justifier of men; granting them a real remission of their sins by the imputation of his righteousness, which answers every demand of law and justice; whereas in the period of the forbearance of God, which continued to the time of Jesus Christ, God neither appeared just nor justifying. He did not appear just, for he suspended the effects of his

justice. He did not appear the justifier, for he seemed only to suspend for a time the punishment of sins, and to leave men under the obligation of that punishment. But in the economy of Jesus Christ he manifests himself both as just and as the justifier, for he displays the awful effects of his justice in the person of his Son in the work of propitiation, in the shedding of his blood; and at the same time, he justifies his people, granting to them a true remission of their sins. And when the greatness of him by whom this expiation was made is considered, the glory of the Divine justice, as exhibited in his death, is elevated in the highest possible degree.

In the propitiation then of Jesus Christ, the justice of God in the salvation of sinners is made conspicuous. No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son in his own person hath revealed him. Jesus Christ was set forth to display every attribute of Godhead. The wisdom and power of God are seen in the constitution of the person of Christ and his work, incomparably more fully than in the creation of the heavens and the earth. Perfect justice, mercy, and love to sinners, are beheld no where else. Here God is revealed as infinite in *mercy*, not so the God of man's imagination, whose mercy is a mixture of injustice and weak compassion, and extends only to those who are sup-

posed to deserve it. But in the incarnate God infinite mercy grasps the chief of sinners. Here is pure mercy without merit on the part of man. And where do we find the perfection of divine *justice*? Not in the God of man's imagination, where justice is tempered with mercy, and limited in a thousand ways. Not even in the eternal punishment of the wicked shall we find justice so fully displayed as in the propitiation of Jesus Christ. He gave justice all it could demand, so that it is now shown to have secured the salvation of the redeemed in every age of the world as much as mercy itself. God is shown not only to be merciful to forgive, but he is *faithful and just* to forgive the sinner his sins. Justice, instead of being reduced to the necessity of taking a part from the bankrupt, has received full payment, and guarantees his deliverance. Even the chief of sinners are shown, in the propitiatory sacrifice of their surety, to be perfectly worthy of Divine love, because they are not only perfectly innocent, but have *the righteousness of God*. He hath made him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

V. 27.—*Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay, but by the law of faith.*

*Where is boasting then?*—That is, according to the doctrine which the Apostle, by the Spirit

of God, is teaching. There is no ground for it, or for ascribing salvation in any part to the works of men. This shows, that salvation was appointed to come to the redeemed through faith, for the very purpose of excluding all pretences to allege that human merit has any share in it. This applies to all works, moral as well as ceremonial. If ceremonial works only were here meant, as many contend, and if moral works have some influence in procuring salvation, or in justification, then the Apostle could not have asked this question. Boasting would not have been excluded.

Paul had declared the only way in which a man can be "just with God." He had proved, that it is not by his own righteousness which is of the law, but by that righteousness which is received by faith. This is clear from what had been advanced in the preceding verse, from which this is an inference. If, then—as if he had said—God had purposed that men should have any ground of boasting, he would not have set forth Christ to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, that thereby a way might be opened for justifying sinners, so that his justice might suffer no prejudice. But now he has taken this course; and, therefore, the only way of justification precludes all boasting.

"Paul is not here," says Calvin, "disputing

merely concerning ceremonies, or any external works, but comprehends all works of every kind and degree. Boasting is excluded without all doubt, since we can produce nothing of our own that merits the approbation or commendation of God. And here he is not speaking of limitation or diminution of merit, since he does not allow the least particle of it. Thus, if boasting of works be removed by faith, so that it takes away from man all praise, while all power and glory are ascribed to God, it follows that no works whatever contribute to the attainment of righteousness."

*By what law is boasting excluded?*—It is not by that of works; for if works were admitted, in the smallest degree, to advance or aid man's justification, he might in that proportion have ground of boasting. It is, then, by the law of faith; not by a law requiring faith, or as if the Gospel was a law, a new law, or, as it has been termed, a remedial or mitigated law—but the word law is here used in allusion to the law of works, according to a figure usual in the Scriptures. By the same figure Jesus says, "This is the work of God, that ye believe in him whom he hath sent." Here faith is called a work, for a similar reason. Faith in the righteousness of Christ is, by the appointment of God, the medium of a sinner's justification, without any

consideration of works. This way of justification divests a man of his own righteousness—of obtaining any thing on account of his conformity to the law, the idea of which can have no place, since he must admit that he is a transgressor of the law. It impels him to flee out of himself, and to lay hold of the righteousness of another, and so leaves no place of glorying or boasting in himself, or in his own performances more or less. His justification is solely by faith; and it is clear, that to believe a testimony, and rely on what has been done by another, leaves no place whatever for boasting. “Therefore it is by faith, that it might be by grace.” The whole plan of salvation proceeds on this principle, “that no flesh should glory in his presence,” but “that, according as it is written, he that glorieth let him glory in the Lord.” No ingenuity can ever make salvation by human merit consistent with the passage before us.

*V. 28.—Therefore we conclude, that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.*

In the 20th verse the Apostle had arrived at the conclusion, from all he had said before, that by works of law no man shall be justified in the sight of God. He had next pointed out the way of justification by faith in the atonement; and here he comes to his second and grand



conclusion, as the sum of all he had taught in the preceding part of the Epistle. *Justified by Faith*.—Faith does not justify as an act of righteousness, but as the instrument by which we receive Christ and his righteousness. Believers are said to be justified *by faith*, and *of faith*, and *through faith*; but never *on account of faith*. The declaration of James, that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only, is not in any respect opposed to the affirmation in the passage before us. The question with him is not how men may obtain righteousness for themselves in the presence of God, but how they are proved to be righteous, for he is refuting those who make a vain boast of having faith, when they have only what he calls a dead faith; that is, faith only in profession, which he illustrates by a man's having the appearance of compassion without the reality, and by referring to the body without the spirit or breath.\*

*Without the deeds of the law*.—This does not signify, as Dr Macknight understands it, that “perfect obedience” to law is not necessary; but that no degree of obedience to law is necessary. Good works are necessary for the believer, and are the things which accompany salvation,

\* See Evidences, vol. ii. p. 355.

but they are not in any respect necessary to justification. They have nothing to do with it. This passage asserts not merely that men are justified by faith without *perfect* obedience to any law, but without *any* obedience of their own. It may likewise be remarked, that believers will not be acquitted at the last day on account of their works, but will be judged according to their works. But God does not justify any in this life according to their works, but freely by his grace; and not by works, or according to the works of righteousness which they have done, Titus, iii. 5.

V. 29.—*Is he the God of the Jews only? is he not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also.*

Rather, Is he the God of Jews only? Is he not also of Gentiles? The article before Jews and Gentiles, which is not in the original, makes the assertion respect Jews and Gentiles in general. In the sense of the passage, God is not the God either of the Jews or of the Gentiles in general; but he is the God of Jews and Gentiles indifferently, when they believe in his Son.

V. 30.—*Seeing it is one God which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith.*

*Seeing it is one God.*—This assigns the reason why God must be the God of Gentiles as well as of Jews. If he justifies both in the same

way, he must be equally the God of both. In the previous part of his discussion, Paul had shown that by works of law no flesh shall be justified, proving it first respecting Gentiles, and afterwards respecting Jews. Now he affirms that God's method of justifying man applies equally to Jews and Gentiles. This confirms his doctrine respecting the ruined condition of all men by sin, and of there being only one way of recovery by the righteousness of God received through faith. To urge this was likewise of great importance, with a view to establish the kingdom of Christ in all the earth, Rom. x. 11, 13. Having thus reduced the whole human race to the same level, it follows that all distinction among them must be from God, and not from themselves, who all stand on the same footing with respect to their works. There is but one God, and so but one way of becoming his people, which is by faith.

*By faith, and through faith.*—It is not easy to see why the prepositions here are varied. Similar variations, however, occur in other places, where there appears to be no difference of meaning, as in Gal. ii. 16, where justification, as applied to the same persons, is spoken of in the same sense, "Knowing that a man is not justified *by* works of law, but *through* the faith of Jesus Christ,

even we have believed in Jesus Christ that we might be justified *by* the faith of Christ."

V. 31.—*Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law.*

From the doctrine of justification by faith alone, which the Apostle had been declaring, it might be supposed that the law of God was made void. This consequence might be drawn from the conclusion, that a man is justified by faith without any respect to his obedience to law. This the Apostle denies, and on the contrary asserts, that by his doctrine the law is established. *Made void the law.*—"Bring it to nought," as the same word in the original is rendered, 1 Cor. i. 28; or "destroy," 1 Cor. vi. 13, and xv. 26; "done away," 2 Cor. iii. 7-14; "abolished," Eph. ii. 15; 2 Tim. i. 10. Professors Tholuck and Stuart being unable to perceive how the doctrine of the Apostle establishes the authority of the law, understand law in this place as signifying the Old Testament. This entirely destroys the meaning and use of the passage. That the Old Testament teaches the same way of justification as that taught by the Apostles, is indeed a truth, an important truth, but not the truth here asserted. Mr Stuart says, "How gratuitous justification can be said to confirm or establish the *moral* law (as this text has been

often explained), it seems difficult to make out." But it is quite obvious in what way gratuitous justification by Christ *establishes the law*. Can there be any greater respect shown to the law, than that when God determines to save men from its curse, he makes his own Son sustain its curse? But here, as well as in so many other parts of his exposition of this epistle, we discover the unhappy effect of this commentator's misunderstanding the meaning of the expression at its commencement, *the righteousness of God*. That he should here feel the difficulty he states above, is not surprising, for according to the view he gives of justification, the law of God is completely made void.

Dr Macknight explains establishing the law, to be making it "necessary in many respects." 'The gospel,' he says, in his view and illustration of ch. i. p. 138, 'teaches that because all 'have sinned, and are incapable of perfect obedience, God hath appointed, for their salvation, 'a *righteousness without law*; that is, a righteousness which does not consist in perfect obedience 'to any law whatever, even *the righteousness of faith*, that being the only righteousness attainable by sinners; and at the same time declares, 'that God will accept and reward that kind of 'righteousness through Christ, as if it were a 'perfect righteousness.' Accordingly, in his

interpretation of the 21st verse of chapter iii., he says: 'But *now*, under the gospel, a *righteousness appointed by God*, as the means of the justification of sinners, *without* perfect obedience 'to law of any kind, is made known.' In this manner, mistaking, like Professors Tholuck and Stuart, although in a different way, the import of the expression, "the righteousness of God," he misunderstands the whole train of the Apostle's reasoning, from the seventeenth verse of the first chapter to the end of the fifth chapter, as well as its object, in this discussion on justification, and by his explanation makes void the law altogether. Instead of making it "necessary in many respects," Dr Macknight, as well as Mr Stuart, by representing it as satisfied with an imperfect obedience, which does not meet the demands of any law, either human or divine, that ever was promulgated, makes it void in every respect. Such is the entire consistency among themselves of the doctrines of Scripture, that whenever any one of them is misunderstood, it invariably leads to the misunderstanding of the rest.

Many commentators, with more or less clearness, refer to the doctrine of sanctification, either in whole or in part, the Apostle's denial that he makes void the law. According to them, it is not made void for this reason, because it con-

vinces men of sin, and does not release from personal obedience to its precepts. That the doctrine of justification, by the imputation of Christ's righteousness, does not release believers from obedience to the law, is a most important truth, which Paul fully establishes in the sixth chapter of this epistle. On the contrary, it lays them under additional obligations to obey it, by furnishing additional motives to the love of God. But since their sanctification is always in this life imperfect, were there nothing else to meet the demands of the law, it would be made void—it would remain unfulfilled, both in its precept and penalty. In addition to this, the whole of the previous discussion regards the doctrine of justification, while not a word is said respecting sanctification. And it is evident that this verse is introduced to obviate an objection which might naturally present itself, namely, if man's obedience, in order to his justification, be set aside, the law, which requires obedience, is made void.

But Paul appeals to his doctrine, and according to his usual manner, strongly rejects such an inference. In the preceding verses, from the 20th, he had been announcing that the righteousness of God, which is the complete fulfilment of the law, is placed to the account of him who believes for his justification, by which God, in thus justifying the sinner solely on the ground

of a perfect obedience, shows himself to be *just*. Do we *then*, he says, make void the law? Our doctrine not only maintains its authority, but also exhibits the fulfilment of all its demands. The connecting particle shows that he rests his proof on what had gone before, to which he appeals, and not on the ground of sanctification, to which he had been making no reference, and to which, if he had referred, it would not have borne out his assertion.

“Think not,” said our blessed Lord, “that I am come to destroy the law and the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in nowise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.” It is to this fulfilment—to the *righteousness of God*, which in the context the Apostle had been illustrating, and which Jesus Christ brought in—that he here appeals. Do we make the law void when we conclude that a man is justified by faith without doing the works of the law, since we show that his faith receives a perfect righteousness, by which, in all its demands and all its sanction, it is *fulfilled*? No; it is in this very way we establish it. In this glorious establishment of the law, Paul, in another place, exults, when he counts all things but loss for the excellency of Christ, and desires to be found in him, not



having his own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith. While he thus tramples on his own righteousness, by which the law never could be established, he confidently appeals to the righteousness of God, now made his by faith, which is precisely in accordance with his conclusion in the 28th verse, that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law. And afterwards, at the termination of his mortal career, in the immediate prospect of death, he triumphs in the consideration that there is laid up for him a crown of *righteousness*—a crown, the reward of that perfect obedience by which *the law is magnified and made honourable*.

## CHAPTER IV.

ROMANS, IV. 1-25.

THIS chapter consists of four parts. In the first, the Apostle, by referring to the history of Abraham and the authority of David, illustrates his doctrine of justification by faith. Nothing could be so well calculated to convince both Jewish and Gentile believers, especially the former, how vain is the expectation of those who look for justification by their own works. Abraham was a patriarch eminently holy, the head of the nation of Israel, the friend of God, the father of all who believe, in whose seed all the nations of the world were to be blessed. David was a man according to God's own heart, the progenitor of the Messiah, his great personal type, and a chosen and anointed King of Israel. If, then, Abraham had not been justified by his works, but by the righteousness of God imputed to him through faith, and David, speaking by the Spirit of God, had declared that the only way in which a man can receive justification, is by his sin being covered by the imputation of that righteousness, who could suppose that it was to be obtained by any other

means? By these two references, the Apostle likewise shows, that the way of justification was the same from the beginning, both under the old and the new dispensation. This he had before intimated, in saying that both the law and the prophets bore witness to the righteousness of God, which is upon all them that believe.

In the three other parts of this chapter, Paul shows, first, that circumcision, to which the Jews ascribed so much efficacy, contributed nothing to Abraham's justification, and that the righteousness imputed to him was bestowed before his circumcision, with the express intention of proving, that righteousness should be imputed to all who believe though they be not circumcised. In the next place, he proves, that the promise of the inheritance made to Abraham was not through the legal dispensation, but through that righteousness which is received by faith; and that the whole plan of justification was arranged in this manner, in order that the blessing conveyed through faith by the free favour of God, might be made sure to all the seed of Abraham,—that is, to “the children of the promise,” Rom. ix. 8, whether Jews or Gentiles. And, lastly, Paul describes Abraham's faith, and states the benefit resulting from its exhibition to believers, for whose sake chiefly his faith was recorded. It is particularly to be

noticed, that throughout the chapter not a word is said respecting Abraham's sanctification, although his whole history, after leaving his own country, furnishes so remarkable an example of a holy walk and conversation. All that is brought into view is the strength of his faith. It is thus shown, that neither moral nor ceremonial, neither evangelical nor legal works, are of any account whatever in the act of justification, or contribute in any degree to procure that blessing.

V. 1.—*What shall we then say that Abraham, our father as pertaining to the flesh, hath found?*

In the third chapter the Apostle had replied to the objections which might be offered to what he had before advanced respecting the Jews. First, it might be enquired if, as appeared from his doctrine, the Jews could not be saved by their distinguished privileges connected with the law, or by observing the rite of circumcision, what *advantage* did they possess over others, and what *profit* had they from circumcision? Second, on the supposition of their being transgressors, it was asked, if their sin was the means of *commending* the righteousness of God, was it not unjust to punish them as sinners? Lastly, if all that had been said was true, what were they *better* than others? After obviating all these objections, and proving from the character

of the Jews, and of all other men, as delineated in the Scriptures, the impossibility of their being justified by the works of law, Paul had exhibited the only way in which sinners could obtain justification before God, and had shown that it was bestowed in such a way, that all boasting on the part of man is excluded. Another objection might now naturally present itself to the Jews in connexion with the case of Abraham, who had received the ordinance of circumcision from God himself, and whose eminent piety they held in such veneration. It might be asked what, according to the Apostle's doctrine, could be said regarding him; what had he found, or obtained? Did not he obtain justification in these ways? Such is the objection which the Apostle introduces in this and the following verse, and answers fully in both its parts.

*Abraham our father.*—In the course of this chapter, Abraham is again and again denominated, in a spiritual sense, the father of all believers; but in this place it appears, according to the questions put respecting him, that he is spoken of as the natural progenitor of the Jewish nation. The expression *our* is, therefore, to be considered as referring to the Jews, as in verses 5th and 9th of the preceding chapter, and not to believers, whether Jews or Gentiles, as in verses 12, 16, 24, and 25 of this chapter. That it is thus

to be understood does not appear, however, from the expression *pertaining to the flesh*, since it is not joined with that of father in the original. The order there is, "Abraham our father hath found as pertaining to the flesh."

*As pertaining to the flesh.*—That is, respecting circumcision, of which the Apostle had spoken, ch. ii. ; or by any work or privilege, Phil. iii. 4. *Circumcision* especially was the token of the covenant which contained all the promises that God had made to Abraham, saying, "My covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant." Could it be supposed that this rite, so solemnly enjoined, and connected with such gracious promises, had no procuring influence in Abraham's justification? Such is the objection supposed in this first verse to be brought by the Jews, which the Apostle fully answers in the sequel.

V. 2.—*For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory ; but not before God.*

If Abraham was justified on account of his works, as the Jews believed, it must be admitted that he had something to boast of, contrary to what Paul had just before declared, that all boasting on such grounds is excluded, and the doctrine of the Apostle must be set aside. Than this no objection that could be offered would appear to the Jews more plausible or

forcible ; it was therefore important to answer it. Being, however, entirely groundless, the Apostle at once repels it, and sets aside the question previously proposed respecting circumcision, in that prompt and brief manner of which we see an example at the end of the 8th verse of the former chapter. He answers, *But not before God*. Abraham had no ground of boasting before God, not having been justified either by the observance of the rite of circumcision, or by any other work of obedience which he had performed ; and this Paul fully proves in the sequel.

*V. 3.—For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.*

Having denied in the foregoing verse that Abraham was justified, or had any ground of boasting, either on account of his circumcision or his obedience, Paul next supports his denial by an appeal to the Scriptures, which was calculated to carry stronger conviction to the Jews, than all things else he could have alleged. His proof is drawn from the historical records of the Old Testament, and thus he sets his seal to its complete verbal inspiration, quoting what is there recorded as the decision of God ; yet many who profess to receive the Bible as the word of God, deny that portion of it to be inspired. His meaning then by the question, *what saith the Scripture*, is, that God himself hath by his

own word decided this matter, for the fact is there declared that *Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness*. This quotation is taken from Gen. xv. 6, where the promise to Abraham is recorded, that his seed should be innumerable as the stars of heaven, being the renewal of the promise, Gen. xii. 2, when he was called out of his own country. It thus comprehended the truth announced to him at different times, that all the nations of the world should be blessed in his *seed*, that is, in the Messiah, Gal. iii. 16. This promise referred to that made to our first parents after the fall, in which was included the hope of eternal redemption to be accomplished by the Deliverer of mankind, who was to spring from him, as God declared to Abraham. The above passage then, according to Paul, proves that the *righteousness of God* is received by faith, and is an example of the testimony, as has been already noticed, that is rendered to it by the law. It refutes the opinion of those who, misunderstanding the manner in which the Apostle James expresses himself, affirm, that a man is first justified only by faith, but afterwards by works which flow from faith.

*And it was counted to him for righteousness. Rather unto righteousness.*—It is not instead of righteousness, as this translation *for righteous-*



*ness* has led many to suppose. By faith a man becomes truly righteous. Faith is the recipient of that righteousness by which we are justified. *Unto* righteousness is the literal rendering, as the same word in the original is so often translated in this discussion, as where it is said, chap. i. 16, the gospel is the power of God *unto* salvation; and chap. iii. 22, even the righteousness of God which is *unto* all; and so in innumerable other places, but especially in a passage precisely parallel to the one before us, chap. x. 10, "For with the heart man believeth *unto* righteousness." This is the signification of the phrase in the verse before us, which ought to have been translated in the same way. The expression "unto righteousness" is elliptical, and signifies unto the receiving of righteousness. In the different French translations, the meaning of the original is properly expressed "*à justice*;" that is, to, or *unto* righteousness, and in the same way in the Vulgate, "*ad justitiam*," to righteousness.

That faith is not itself the justifying righteousness is demonstrably evident, from the very phraseology of many passages that speak of faith and righteousness in the same place. "Even the *righteousness of God*, which is *by faith* of Jesus Christ unto all, and upon all them that believe." Here righteousness is supposed to be

one thing, and faith to be another. Righteousness is what we want in order to justification; faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, as testified in the gospel, is the means through which we receive this righteousness. Believing, then, is not the righteousness, but it is the means through which we become righteous. Can language more expressly show that righteousness and faith are two different things, for two different purposes, though always found united in the same persons, and both equally necessary? In like manner, in Romans, x. 10, the Apostle says, "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness." Here it is necessarily implied that faith is not righteousness, but that it is the means through which we receive righteousness. Nothing then can be a greater corruption of the truth than to represent faith itself as accepted instead of righteousness, or to be the righteousness that saves the sinner. Faith is not righteousness. Righteousness is the fulfilling of the law.

This verse, connected with the two following, proves, like the 28th verse of the foregoing chapter, that faith is opposed to works, and not considered as a work in the matter of justification. Yet many speak of the excellence of Abraham's faith in such a way as to represent the patriarch to be saved by faith as a work—as the most excellent of all works. Mr Tholuck

has many observations that are exceedingly culpable in this respect. He quotes from Philo, to prove the excellence of faith, who speaks of it as "the queen of virtues." He understands righteousness in this verse to denote "*subjective holiness*;" and according to this most erroneous interpretation of the passage (which proves that he misunderstands the whole scope of the Apostle's discourse), and the view which he has given of faith, he adds, 'God looked upon Abraham's childlike submission as if it were *real holiness*, and attached value to it alone.' He seems to consider that it was not the object of faith—namely, the Messiah's righteousness, that constituted Abraham's righteousness, but the act of faith. Dr Macknight has a long note on this verse directly opposed to the Apostle's doctrine of justification. 'In judging Abraham,' he says, 'God will place on the one side of the account his *duties*, and on the other his *performances*. And on the side of his performances he will place his faith, and by mere favour will value it as equal to a complete performance of his duties, and reward him as if he were a righteous person. But neither here, nor in Gal. iii. 6, is it said, that *Christ's righteousness was counted to Abraham*. In both passages the expression is, *Abraham believed God, and it, viz. his believing God, was*

‘*counted to him for righteousness.* . . . Farther, ‘as it is nowhere said in Scripture, that Christ’s ‘righteousness was imputed to Abraham, so ‘neither is it said any where, that Christ’s ‘righteousness is imputed to believers.’ By such strange reasoning, and groundless assertion, does Dr Macknight labour to banish from the Bible the doctrine of the imputation of Christ’s righteousness.

V. 4.—*Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt.*

Some understand this as implying *working perfectly*—doing all that a man is bound to do. But this is contrary to the meaning; it applies to work of any kind. No reward can be said to be of grace that is given for work of any description. Abraham did not obtain righteousness by faith as a good disposition, or by counting that disposition above its value. Had Abraham been justified by faith as an act or disposition worthy of approbation, he would have been justified by works, and might have boasted.

V. 5.—*But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.*

*But to him that worketh not.*—This is entirely misunderstood by Dr Macknight and Mr Stuart, as if it meant, according to Dr Macknight, “one who does not work all that he is

bound to do," or, according to Mr Stuart, "the sinner who has not exhibited perfect obedience." It means, however, what it literally expresses, namely, that the person who is justified does not *work at all* for his justification. It is not that he does not perform all the works that he ought, but that for justification he does nothing. It is true that he works, but not for justification. Mr Tholuck seems to think that the case of Abraham is only an analogy, and not an example of justification by faith. But Abraham's faith respected the Messiah, whose day he saw afar off, and by this he was justified.

*Justifieth the ungodly.*—If the expression, "to him that worketh not," needed any explanation, this term—the ungodly—would place its meaning beyond all doubt. The term ungodly is applied throughout the Scriptures to wicked men, Rom. v. 6; 1st Tim. i. 9; 1st Pet. iv. 18; 2d Pet. ii. 5, iii. 7; Jude, 4, 15. Men are ungodly in themselves, though, as soon as they are justified, they cease to be ungodly. They are ungodly till *they believe*; but in the moment that they receive the gift of faith, they are thereby united to the Saviour, and are instantly invested with the robe of righteousness, and also partake, according to the measure of their faith, of all those other graces that are received out of his fulness. They then pass from *death to life*,

a transition in which there is no medium ; they are turned from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, for till then, being without Christ, they are the children of the Devil. They cannot at the same time be both dead and alive—under the power of God and under the power of the Devil ; they must in every instant of their existence be either under the one or the other. In that moment, then, in which they believe they are justified ; and to justify, signifies not to treat men as if they were just or righteous, though they are not so, but that they are really just. In this Professors Tholuck and Stuart entirely err. To justify, with them, is not to acquit as being perfectly righteous, but to hold men to be righteous when they are not righteous. The expression, *justifieth the ungodly*, Dr Macknight says, ‘ does not imply that Abraham was an ungodly person when he was justified ; the Apostle’s meaning is *justifieth him who had been ungodly.*’ This entirely sets aside the Apostle’s declaration. Another very remarkable instance of his contradicting, in express terms, an explicit declaration of the Apostle, occurs in his note on the last verse of the seventh chapter of this Epistle, where, by first converting the assertion it contains into a question, and then boldly adding to it, he makes the Apostle say precisely the reverse of what he actually affirms,

‘ *Do I myself then as a slave, serve with the mind*  
 ‘ the law of God, but with the flesh the law of  
 ‘ sin? BY NO MEANS.’ The whole concluding  
 part of that chapter, from verse 14, Mr Stuart  
 has most violently perverted.

Mr Scott’s note, in his Commentary on this  
 expression, “justifieth the ungodly,” is incor-  
 rect, and his ideas on the subject are confused.  
 Contrary to the Apostle, he asserts that a man  
 is not “absolutely ungodly at the time of his  
 justification.” It is true, as has been observed,  
 that the moment a man is justified, he is godly;  
 but the question is, if he be godly or ungodly  
 in the moment which precedes his justification.  
 If he be godly before, then the words of the  
 Apostle are false; and the contrary, that God  
 justifies the *godly*, would be true. But Mr  
 Scott’s views on this point were very erroneous,  
 as appears from his remarks on Cornelius, in his  
 note preceding the verse before us. He says,  
 ‘ Even the proposition, “Good works are the  
 ‘ fruits of faith, and follow after faith,” in Christ,  
 ‘ though a general truth, may admit of some  
 ‘ exception, in such cases as that of Cornelius.’  
 This contradicts the 12th and 13th articles of  
 his church, to which he appears to refer; but,  
 what is of more consequence, his statement ex-  
 plicitly contradicts the whole tenor of the Holy  
 Scriptures, and of the plan of redemption. The

case of Cornelius forms no exception ; nor does it contain even the shadow of an exception to the truth declared in the verse we are considering.\* Mr Scott closes his note on Acts, x. 1, 2, by remarking, ‘ Perhaps these observations may assist the reader in understanding this instructing chapter, which cannot easily be made to accord with the exactness of systematical writers on these subjects.’ Now, there is not the smallest difficulty in showing that all which that chapter contains is in exact accordance with every other part of Scripture.

Mr Scott, after some further remarks on the justification of the ungodly, says, ‘ Nay, the justified believer, whatever his holiness or diligence may be, never works *for this purpose*, and he still comes before God as *ungodly in this respect*.’ This is incorrect. He always comes as a sinner ; that is, as one who is daily, hourly, and every moment sinning. And when he comes so, he comes as he is ; for this is truth. But he is not *ungodly* after he believes, for this is a character that belongs only to the enemies of God. The Christian then cannot in any respect come in such a character, for he cannot come in a character that does not belong to him. There is an essential difference between

\* On the case of Cornelius I refer to Evidences, vol. ii. pp. 429-440.



coming to God as a sinner, and coming to him as ungodly. ‘ Abraham,’ Mr Scott subjoins, ‘ several years before, by faith obeyed the call and command of God ; and therefore could not be, strictly speaking, altogether *ungodly*, when it was said, “ He believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness;” so that the example of Abraham is alone a full and clear refutation of the construction by some put on this text, that men are altogether and in every sense ungodly and unregenerate at the time when God justifies them—a sentiment of most dangerous tendency.’ The assertion of the Apostle is, that God justifies the ungodly, which can have no other meaning than that men are ungodly in the moment that precedes their justification. It is truly a astonishing that the example of Abraham should be referred to as a full and clear refutation of the plain and obvious construction of this assertion of the Apostle, which it never can be of dangerous tendency to believe implicitly. The danger lies in not receiving it, and in raising difficulties and objections which obscure and neutralize a declaration, the meaning of which is so clear and manifest. This must always have the effect, as in the case before us, of leading into most palpable error, inconsistency, and misrepresentation of the Divine testimony. If Abra-

ham was godly before the time when it is recorded that he believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness, he was also a believer before this time, and justified before this time, although his justification was then for the first time recorded. The limitations, therefore, "strictly speaking," and "altogether *ungodly*," which Mr Scott introduces, are entirely misplaced. He was not ungodly at all. To intimate, as Mr Scott does here, that Abraham was not a justified believer till the period when it is recorded that his faith was counted to him for righteousness, is to say that a man may exercise strong faith, and obey God, and walk in communion with him, long before he is justified, which is to overturn the doctrine of justification. But no such confusion and discrepancies are to be found in the Scriptures. When, in the eleventh chapter of the Hebrews, the Apostle illustrates his declaration in the end of the tenth chapter, that *the just shall live by faith*, he affirms that, "*By faith*, Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place, which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed." If, then, faith justifies, as the Apostle is there showing, Abraham was justified by faith when he "departed as the Lord had spoken to him," Gen. xii. 4, many years before the time of the declaration recorded in Gen. xv. 6. On the whole, there

is not a spark of godliness in any man before he is united to Christ ; and the moment he is united to him, he is justified.

In the fourth and fifth verses before us, the distinction between receiving a reward for works, and receiving it through faith, is clearly established. In the first case, a man receives what is due to him ; in the second, all comes in the way of favour. Here also faith and works are directly opposed to each other. To preserve the doctrine of these verses from abuse, it is only necessary to recollect that works are denied as having any thing to do in justification, but that they are absolutely necessary in the life of the believer. " Works," says Luther, "are not taken into consideration when the question respects justification. But true faith will no more fail to produce them than the sun can cease to give light. But it is not on account of works that God justifies us."—" Without doubt," says Melancthon, " the renewal of the heart must follow faith, but if the question is of justification, turn away thine eyes from this renewal, and fix them solely on the promises, upon Christ, knowing that we are not justified on account of this renewal, but for the love (faith) of Christ. Faith justifies us, not because, as you write, it is in us the root of the good tree, but because it takes hold on Christ,

on account of whose love we are made acceptable.”—“ We offer nothing to God,” says Calvin, “ but we are prevented by his grace altogether free, without his having any respect to our works.”

Men are prone to magnify one part of the Divine counsel, by disparaging or denying another, which to their wisdom appears to stand in opposition to it. Some speak of faith in such a manner as to disparage works. Others are so zealous for works as to disparage faith; while some, in order to honour both, join them in justification. The Apostle Paul gives every truth its proper value, and its proper place. In this epistle he establishes the doctrine of justification by faith alone, and speaks not of the fruits of faith till the fifth chapter. But these fruits he shows to be the necessary result of that faith which justifies.

*V. 6.—Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works.*

As the blessing of the pardon of sin cannot be separated from our being viewed as perfectly righteous in the sight of God, Paul further confirms his doctrine by a reference to the 32d Psalm, which gives the meaning of David's words. In this manner one part of Scripture is employed to open and explain what is said in another part. *Imputeth.* The same word in the

original, which, in verses 3, 4, 5, is rendered *counted* or *reckoned*, is here rendered imputed. All of them bear the same meaning of placing to the believer's account, as if he himself had performed it, the righteousness of Jesus Christ, called in chap. v. 19, his "obedience." "Here we see," says Calvin, "the mere cavil of those who limit the works of the law within ceremonial rites, since what before were denominated works of the law, are now called *works* simply, and without an adjunct. The simple and unrestricted language occurring in this passage, which all readers must understand as applying indifferently to every kind of work, must for ever conclude the whole of this dispute. For nothing is more inconsistent than to deprive ceremonies alone of the power of justifying, when Paul excludes works indefinitely."

The expression, "imputeth righteousness without works," is important, as it clearly ascertains that the phrase "for righteousness," literally *unto righteousness*, signifies unto the receiving of righteousness. It signifies receiving righteousness itself, not a substitute for righteousness, nor a thing of less value than righteousness, which is gratuitously accounted or accepted as righteousness. In Dr Macknight's note, however, on verse 3d, already quoted, where he is

labouring to prove that faith is counted *for* righteousness, or according to Mr Stuart, *as* righteousness, he affirms that God values faith as equal to complete performance of duty, and observes, that it is no where said in Scripture that Christ's righteousness is imputed to believers. The verse before us contains an explicit refutation of these unscriptural statements, which subvert the whole of the Apostle's reasoning on the doctrine of justification. The righteousness here said to be imputed is that righteousness to which Paul had all along been referring, even *the righteousness of God* on account of the revelation of which the gospel is the power of God unto salvation, and which by the Apostle Peter is called *the righteousness of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ*, in which believers have obtained precious faith. That it is to this righteousness *which fulfils the law* the Apostle in the verse before us refers, is evident, if we look back to what he says in the 21st verse of the foregoing chapter, and to what he continues to say respecting it onwards to this 6th verse, and *to the effect he here ascribes to it*. If any one can suppose that all this is insufficient to settle the question, I shall produce an argument which is unanswerable, and which all the ingenuity of man is unable to gainsay. *It must be the righteous-*

*ness of God (or the righteousness of Christ, which is the same) that is here spoken of,* BECAUSE THERE IS NO OTHER RIGHTEOUSNESS ON EARTH.

Mr Stuart comes far short of the truth when he represents the Apostle as here confirming his doctrine by the case of David, as a second example or single instance. David is appealed to by Paul, not in respect to his own justification, but as to the doctrine which he taught with respect to this subject in one of his Psalms, where he speaks as he was moved by the Holy Ghost. He is there teaching how all are justified who ever were or ever shall be justified. It is, then, much more than a second example. It is the declaration of God himself, who spoke *by the mouth of his servant David*, Acts, iv. 25. The effect of Mr Stuart's misunderstanding the expression, "the righteousness of God," ch. i. 17, and iii. 21, and ascribing to it the signification of "the justification which God bestows," is, in his explanation of the verse before us, as in so many other places, abundantly evident. Although compelled here to attach to the original word its proper meaning of *righteousness*, instead of "justification," the vagueness of the meaning he had, as above, so erroneously ascribed to it, leaves an opening for explaining it to be a fictitious righteousness belonging to faith itself, instead of a real right-

eousness, namely, the righteousness of Christ received by faith. 'Here,' he says, 'and elsewhere in this chapter, where the same phraseology occurs, it is evident that the word is not to be understood in the sense of justification (which is the most common meaning of it in our epistle).' So far from this being its most common meaning, it is not even once its meaning out of no fewer than thirty-six times in which it occurs in this epistle.

Mr Stuart's views on the all-important subject of justification, are not only completely erroneous and unscriptural, but, such as they are, he holds them in a manner so confused and indistinct, that he alternately asserts and contradicts what he has asserted. He one while speaks of faith as 'not of itself such an act of obedience to the divine law, as that it will supply the place of perfect obedience.' 'Nor has it,' he adds, 'any efficacy in itself, as a *meritum ex condigno* to save men; it is merely *the instrument of union to Christ, in order that they may receive a gratuitous salvation,*' p. 176. At other times, he speaks as if faith were accepted at a rate much above its value, and that the justification of a sinner is gratuitous, because of such acceptance. 'Their faith,' says he, 'was *gratuitously* reckoned as equivalent to the *δικαιοσύνη* (viz. righteousness) demanded by the



‘law.’ Here faith itself is made the ground of justification, and taken at a value far above its intrinsic worth. But faith is, in no point of view, equivalent to the obedience the law requires. It is Christ’s obedience that is taken as an equivalent to an obedience to the law; and for the best of all reasons, because it is an equivalent. The value of faith is, that, by the Divine appointment, it is the medium of union to Christ. If it be true that faith is “merely” an instrument of union to Christ, in order that we may receive a gratuitous salvation, as, in one of these passages, Mr Stuart asserts, how is it that faith was gratuitously reckoned as equivalent to the righteousness demanded by the law? If faith is accepted as an equivalent to righteousness, then it cannot be merely the medium of connecting us with Christ. He observes, p. 177—‘To say, *was counted* (namely, ‘their faith) *for justification*, would make no ‘tolerable sense—but to say, *was counted as* ‘*complete obedience*, would be saying just what ‘the Apostle means to say, viz. that the believer ‘is gratuitously justified.’ And again, he affirms that faith “is counted *as* righteousness,” p. 172. There, and in other places, the imputation of Christ’s righteousness for the justification of a sinner is excluded by Mr Stuart, as it is by

Dr Macknight. Mr Stuart's self-contradictions, contained in his commentary, are noticed as follows in the American Theological Magazine, called "The Biblical Repertory," of July 1833, where it is reviewed,—'Respected Sir, 'You admit what you deny, and deny what you 'admit, in such rapid succession, your readers 'are bewildered.'

According, then, to these statements, righteousness, that is, the righteousness of Christ, which does indeed fulfil the demands of the law, is not imputed to the believer for justification—although this is explicitly asserted in the text, when it is said, "God imputeth righteousness," for on earth, as has been observed, there is no other righteousness—while faith, which does not fulfil so much as one of its demands, is reckoned as equivalent to all its demands; and besides, righteousness is thus counted to a man as belonging to him, which, "in reality does not belong to him." And this we are told by Mr Stuart, is 'just what the Apostle means to 'say.' Paul affirms that God is just when he justifies him that believeth. But according to Mr Stuart, in thus representing God as counting for a reality what is a mere figment, and counting "something" to a man "which does not belong to him," not a trace of any thing that

has even the semblance of justice in a sinner's justification is left. And on *these grounds* salvation is asserted by him to be "gratuitous."

Mr Stuart considers that the mercy of God, for Christ's sake, accepts believers as just, while they are not so in reality. This overturns the gospel and the justice of the Divine character. It destroys both law and gospel. If a man is not truly just, God cannot account him just, nor treat him as just. Why cannot Mr Stuart see believers perfectly just in Jesus Christ, their head and substitute? But this is what might be expected from one who cannot see the human race guilty in Adam. It is quite natural, then, that he should not see believers righteous in Christ. According to Mr Stuart, God is not a just God in saving sinners, for he acquits as just those whom he knows to be unjust. He represents God as an unjust God in punishing the innocent, for he visits with suffering and death infants, who are supposed innocent of Adam's sin.\*

According to the doctrine of the Apostle, when a sinner is justified it is by the imputation of righteousness, not a fictitious but a real right-

\* Mr Stuart afterwards explains his views on the subject of justification in a manner that adds to the confusion, and makes them, if possible, still worse; which shall be noticed in the Appendix.

eousness. The believer, in his union with Christ, is viewed as perfectly righteous, because in truth he is so, for the righteousness of God is "upon him," ch. iii. 22; Jehovah is his righteousness, Jer. xxiii. 6; God is therefore *just* in justifying him, and in the day of judgment the Great Judge will pronounce him "righteous," and will award to him "a crown of righteousness," according to the strictest justice. The gift of this righteousness, with the justification it brings along with it, is indeed perfectly gratuitous, and the manner of bestowing it is gratuitous—freely by grace—but "grace reigns *through righteousness*," Rom. v. 21, in that way which meets every demand of law and justice. This last is a most important declaration, with which the Apostle closes his discussion on the doctrine of justification; but important as it is, Mr Stuart has altogether mistaken its meaning, and has misrepresented it in the same way as he has misrepresented the corresponding expression at the opening of this discussion, chap. i. 17. Had he understood it, he would not have perverted the Apostle's reasoning as he has done, and propounded sentiments respecting the all-important doctrine of justification, which annihilate the glory of that redemption in which righteousness and peace have kissed

each other—sentiments which compromise the justice, and dishonour the character of God.

‘Faith,’ says Mr Bell, in his View of the Covenants, p. 226, ‘rests upon Christ alone. It in effect excludes itself as a work, in the matter of justification. It is not a thing upon which a sinner rests: it is his resting on the Surety. Therefore that man who would bring in his faith, as a part of his justifying righteousness before God, thereby proves that he has no faith in Jesus Christ. He comes as with a lie in his right hand; for such is the absurdity, that he trusts in the act of his faith, not in its object, *i. e.* he believes in his faith, not in Jesus Christ. Having taken Christ, as he pretends, he would have that very act whereby he received him, sustained at the Divine tribunal, as his righteousness. Thus Christ is bid to stand at a distance, and the sinner’s own act is by himself bid to come near in the case of justification. This is nothing else but works under another name. It is not faith, for that necessarily establishes grace.”

*V. 7.—Saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered.*

This verse, in connexion with the preceding, shows that sins are not forgiven except in a way in which righteousness is imputed. Anciently, the high-priest was appointed to bless the people,

Num. vi. 24, as the type of Jesus Christ, who, as the great high-priest, imparts a real blessedness. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ." In him it was promised that all nations should be blessed. When about to ascend into heaven, he lifted up his hands and blessed his disciples; and at the last day he will, from the throne of his glory, pronounce all his people the *blessed* of his Father. On that day, and not till then, shall any of them be able fully to comprehend all that is implied in this term in the verse before us.

*Blessed are they.*—"Blessed is he" (the man), says David, "whose transgression is forgiven." David speaks of one person, but Paul speaks of many. This alteration which the Apostle makes should not be overlooked. The work of redemption being now finished, the Apostle is commissioned by the Holy Ghost, who dictated the words, thus to include for their encouragement the whole mystical body of Christ—all that are his, whether Jews or Gentiles. *Covered.*—This appears to be in allusion to the mercy-seat which covered the law. Sins must be covered before they can be forgiven. There must be a way in which God hides them from his face. This way is through the blood of Christ. And

he that is dead with him is freed or justified from sin; Rom. vi. 7. His sins are for ever covered, as being cast into the depths of the sea. Mic. vii. 19. They are blotted out with the Saviour's blood. "I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins," Isaiah, xliii. 25. He is saved from the guilt of sin immediately on his believing. The righteousness of the Saviour being imputed to the sinner, none of his own unrighteousness can attach to him; the imputation of both cannot take place. There is a full remission of his past sins, and none which he shall afterwards commit shall be judicially laid to his charge, Rom. viii. 33. Being stripped of the filthy garments, and clothed with a change of raiment, Zech. iii. 4, as certain as God is unchangeable it shall never be taken off him. "I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more," Jer. xxxi. 34. "As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us," Psalm ciii. 12. 'Wearied at length,' says Luther, 'with your own righteousness, rejoice and confide in the righteousness of Christ. Learn, my dear brother, to know Christ, and Christ crucified, and learn to despair of thyself, and to sing to the Lord this song: Lord Jesus! thou art my righteousness; but I am

‘ thy sin. Thou hast taken what belonged to  
 ‘ me; thou hast given me what was thine.  
 ‘ Thou becamest what thou wert not, in order  
 ‘ That I might become what I was not myself.’

V. 8.—*Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.*

Righteousness is imputed when sin is not imputed, for we here see that the man to whom sin is not imputed is *blessed*. As Jesus was *accursed*, Gal. iii. 13, when the sins of his people were imputed to him, so they are *blessed* when his righteousness is imputed to them. Justification, or the judgment of God, by which he renders us “blessed,” consists of two acts, by one of which he pardons our sins, by the other he gives us the kingdom. This appears in the sequel of this chapter, where we see that the justification of Abraham includes the promise of making him heir of the world, verse 13; and this truth the Apostle establishes not only in the person of Abraham, but also extends it to all the people of God, verse 16. In the eighth chapter of this epistle, where Paul joins together the divine calling and justification, he also connects justification and glorification. Afterwards he adds, “what shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall



he not with him also freely give us all things?" The expression, *God is for us*, marks the effect of justification. It is not said God is not against us, as should be said if justification was only the pardon of sin; but God is for us, which signifies that he not only pardons but blesses us, giving us a right to the kingdom. He not only delivers us from being children of wrath, but adopts us into his family, and makes us his own children. When he discharges us from the pains of the second death, he destines us to the glory of heaven. And likewise the words that follow respecting the delivering up of his Son, and freely giving us all things, clearly import these two great acts of pardon and blessing. The same is also declared by the Prophet Malachi, iii. 17, "And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of Hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son." Justification then corresponds to the righteousness of God, by the imputation of which it is received. By that righteousness the penalty of the law is fulfilled which secures the pardon of sin, and also the precept on account of which the inheritance is awarded.

*V. 9.—Cometh this blessedness then upon the circumcision only, or upon the uncircumcision also? for we say that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness.*

The Apostle having fully established the truth that a man is justified by faith without works, now reverts to the allusion made to circumcision at the beginning of this chapter, in demanding what Abraham had obtained as pertaining to the flesh. He now shows, in the most decisive manner, that Abraham had not obtained justification by means of his circumcision, since he was justified before he was circumcised. And proceeding to prove what he had affirmed, chap. iii. 30, that justification is not confined to the Jews, he asks if the blessedness he had spoken of comes only to those who are circumcised, or to the uncircumcised also. It was the more necessary to decide this question, because the Jews not only believed that justification depended, at least in part, on their works, but that the privileges of the people of God were inseparably connected with circumcision. In the sequel, Paul shows that justification has no necessary connexion with, or dependence on, circumcision. *For we say.*—This is not the language of an objector, as Mr Stuart supposes; it is the position which the Apostle lays down for the purpose of establishing his conclusion. The fact that faith was counted to Abraham unto righteousness, is the ground-work on which he builds.

V. 10.—*How was it then reckoned? when he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision.*

*How was it, or in what circumstances was righteousness counted to him?—This question determines that Abraham's justification by faith was previous to circumcision, and therefore circumcision could not be its cause. If righteousness was imputed to him before he was circumcised, then circumcision is not necessary to justification. It may come on Gentiles as well as on Jews. This is founded on the history of Abraham, recorded in the Old Testament, who was in a state of justification before Ishmael's birth, many years antecedent to the appointment of circumcision.*

V. 11.—*And he received the sign of circumcision; a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had, yet being uncircumcised; that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also.*

If, then, Abraham was justified in uncircumcision, for what purpose, it might be asked, was he circumcised? It is replied, that he received circumcision, which was appointed as a figure or sign of his paternity, literally with respect to a numerous seed, and spiritually of all believers. It intimated that He, in whom all the families of the earth should be blessed, was to spring

from Abraham. This blessedness is described by David as consisting in the imputation of righteousness without works. But this was not all: Circumcision was not only a sign, but a seal of that righteousness which was imputed to Abraham through faith while he was uncircumcised. He had previously been justified by faith, Gen. xv. 6; but now that blessing was sealed to him by circumcision, in order that he might be the father or pattern of all believers, whether circumcised or uncircumcised. It was a seal, assurance, or pledge of the reality of that righteousness which is received by the faith which he had—a *pledge that that righteousness*, by the imputation of which, through his faith, he was justified, *although not then in existence, should, in its appointed period, be brought in.* Circumcision, then, being such a seal or pledge, and as the appointment of Abraham as the father of Christ, by whom this righteousness was to be introduced, included his being the father of the line from which Christ was to spring, it was to be affixed to his natural posterity, and not to cease to be so till the thing signified was accomplished. Here, it would appear, we learn the reason why this seal was to be affixed on the *eighth* day after birth. On the eighth day, the first day of the week, when Jesus, the seed of Abraham, arose from the dead, that righteous-

ness of which circumcision was a seal, was accomplished. In reference to this, and to the change of the Sabbath from the seventh to the eighth day, in consequence of his resurrection, when he brought in the everlasting righteousness, and entered into his rest, it would seem that the eighth day is distinguished in so many ways throughout the Old Testament. On this subject, I refer to Evidences, vol. i. p. 358. *That he might be the father, &c.* In order to his being the *father*. This mark, then, was a sign of Abraham's being the father of all believers, both Jews and Gentiles, to all of whom this righteousness was to be imputed. As it was a seal of the righteousness which he had received by the faith which he had in a state of uncircumcision, it implied that righteousness would be imputed to believers in the same state.

*V. 12.—And the father of circumcision to them who are not of the circumcision only, but who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which he had, being yet uncircumcised.*

This implies that there is a sense in which Abraham is a father of some of his descendants, in which he is not a father to others. To those of them who walk in the steps of his faith he is a spiritual father. While all Abraham's children were circumcised, he was not equally the father of them all. It was only to such of them as

had his faith that he was a father in what is spiritually represented by circumcision. As it is said, "they are not all Israel which are of Israel; neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children; but in Isaac shall thy seed be called; that is, they which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed," Rom. ix. 6. This is also established by our Lord himself, who denied that the unbelieving Jews were the children of Abraham; John, viii. 39. He was, however, not only the father of his believing children, who were circumcised, but of all, in every nation, who walk in the steps of his faith. Believing Gentiles are therefore said to be grafted, contrary to nature, into a good olive-tree, Romans, xi. 24; and to be Abraham's seed, Galatians, iii. 29.

V. 13.—*For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed through the law, but through the righteousness of faith.*

Paul here continues to prove that the blessing of justification is received through faith, and not in any other way. *Heir of the world.*—The promise to Abraham included three things:—1. That the promised seed of the woman should descend from him; 2. That all nations should be blessed in that seed; 3. That, as a pledge of

all this, he and his seed should inherit the land of Canaan. "And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession." Canaan, however, was but an emblem of the heavenly country, of which last only, Abraham could have an everlasting possession; for he was a stranger on the earth, and Canaan was to him "a strange country;" Heb. xi. 9. This he understood it to be, and, accordingly, to the former he looked forward, as what substantially was promised; Heb. xi. 13. 16. This was "that world," as it is designated by our Lord, Luke, xx. 35—a possession, so often called an inheritance, Heb. ix. 15; 1 Pet. i. 4; of which not only Abraham, but also his spiritual posterity were constituted heirs. They were to inherit all things, Rev. xxi. 7; and although the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain, yet all things are theirs, 1 Cor. iii. 21, 23. Abraham, however, being the father or first heir according to that promise, he might properly, by way of distinction, be called "the heir," and on the same ground, the father of many nations, being the father of all God's people, as is likewise promised in the covenant, which is so often referred to in this chapter.

The expression "heir" has a manifest relation to the title of children, which is given to

the people of God in their adoption. It is on this account that Paul joins them together—"If children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ," Rom. viii. 17; by which he teaches that they have not only a right to the good things that God confers, but that they have right in virtue of their adoption, and not of their works. The birthright of a child, which gives him a right to the good things of his father, and distinguishes him from those who may gain them by their services, resembles the privilege conferred by the free and gratuitous adoption of God of his children. In conferring the right in this way, every pretension to merit is excluded; and as God, in the law, had rendered inheritances inalienable, such also is the inviolable stability of the inheritance which God confers. The grandeur of this inheritance is represented in Scripture by the appellation of a *kingdom*, Luke xii. 32; of a *crown*, 2 Tim. iv. 8; and of a *throne*, Rev. iii. 21.

*Or to his seed.*—The covenant in all its promises, and in its fullest extent, in reference to spiritual blessings, was established in Christ, who was emphatically and eminently Abraham's seed, Gal. iii. 16; and in him, with all his members who were the spiritual seed of Abraham, of whom the natural seed were typical, as the land of Canaan was typical of the heavenly inherit-



ance. The promise to the *Seed* was, that all nations should be blessed in Him, and this promise was to Abraham also, as it implied that the Messiah was to be Abraham's seed. The promise to Christ included all the children that God had given him, who are in him and one with him. These are all "joint heirs with Jesus Christ," Rom. viii. 17.

Many are spoken of before Abraham who were the children of God; but we do not read that the first promise respecting the seed was repeated to any of them. Though in the time of Enos, men began to call themselves by the name of the Lord, though Enoch walked with God, though Noah was an heir of the righteousness which is by faith, though Jehovah was the God of Shem, it is not said that the promise of the seed was renewed to them. But to Abraham it was expressly renewed, and hence we see the reason why he is so frequently mentioned in the New Testament, and spoken of as the father of believers.

*Through the law.*—Abraham was the heir of the world, and it is entailed on him and his posterity, but it was not bestowed on Abraham or his seed through the law. Some understand by this phrase, they who seek to justify themselves by keeping the law; but the Apostle is not here shewing that salvation is not by the

law (this he had done before), but that it does not belong to the Jews as such. That is, they are not saved, or are not heirs, as belonging to the legal dispensation, or as being descendants of Abraham. Although, therefore, the reasoning respecting it be applicable to the law of God in general, in whatever form or manner, written or unwritten, or in whatever circumstances, or at whatever period given, yet here it is evidently restricted to the legal dispensation. This appears from v. 16, where part of the seed to whom the promise is made sure, is said to be of the law, which proves that this expression cannot mean those who seek justification by the deeds of the law, for these are not the seed to whom the promise was made sure by grace. As the Apostle then had before shown that the blessing of justification did not depend on circumcision, so he here affirms, that the promise of the inheritance was not to become effectual through, or to be dependent on, a man's being under or belonging to the legal dispensation. This was essential to his purpose, since it was on that economy, and on the privileges connected with it, that the Jews so pertinaciously fixed their hope of acceptance with God, and to which even the Gentile believers were in danger of being brought into bondage. To this subject

the Apostle adverts more fully in his Epistle to the Galatians, chapter iii. 16, 18.

*But through the righteousness of faith.*—The promise given to Abraham, that in his seed the world should be blessed, was not through the law, which did not then exist; but it was through the righteousness of faith. And it could not have been in any other way. “If there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law; but the Scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.” It was therefore to receive its accomplishment only by virtue of and through the communication of the righteousness which is received by faith. This is that righteousness which was counted or imputed to Abraham, when, upon the promise of a numerous seed being made to him, he believed in the Lord. The inheritance comes solely in virtue of this righteousness to those who by it are constituted righteous. “Thy people also *shall be all righteous*, they shall *inherit the land for ever*,” Isa. lx. 21. They shall be “called *trees of righteousness*, the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified,” Isaiah, lxi. 3.

V. 14.—*For if they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise of none effect.*

This and the following verse supply the rea-

sons on which the foregoing assertion is founded. If the Jews are heirs by virtue of their being under the legal dispensation, then the inheritance is not obtained through faith, faith is set aside, and the promise is made of no effect; that is, the promise of the inheritance through faith is then annulled, as the inheritance is obtained through descent. But that the inheritance was not by the law of Moses in any respect whatever, Paul has shown, Gal. iii. 17, where he says that the law, which was 430 years after, could not disannul the promise confirmed so long before, and observes, that if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise, but God gave it to Abraham by promise. The expression here, "if they who are of the law be heirs," is in itself a proof, that by law, in this and the preceding verse, is not meant law in general, or obedience to law, because a man is not constituted an heir by his obedience, or through work or price of any kind.

*V. 15.—Because the law worketh wrath: for where no law is, there is no transgression.*

Two reasons are here given why the promise of the inheritance cannot be accomplished through the law. 1. *For the law worketh wrath, instead of working salvation.*—No law makes provision for the exercise of mercy, but requires perfect obedience to all its commands, and sub-

jects the transgressor to punishment. If, then, faith were made void, the promise would become of no effect, as the possibility of obtaining the inheritance would be destroyed altogether.

2. *For where no law is, there is no transgression.*—Some read *But*, instead of *For*. The original word, however, does not seem ever to have that signification in the New Testament, and the passages referred to in its favour do not bear it out. Others render it *truly* or *verily*, as in Acts, xvi. 37, and understand the meaning to be as follows: where truly, or indeed, there is no law, there is no transgression; that is, if faith alone be the means of receiving the promised inheritance, and if, in this respect, law is set aside, there can be no transgression of law that can affect the promise or render it of no effect. But the original word properly signifies *for*. That where there is no law there is no transgression, appears to be a proverbial saying, at least it must be acknowledged to be true, as it clearly implies that where there is a law there is transgression. The Jews had a law to which none could plead that they rendered perfect obedience; they were therefore exposed to punishment instead of being entitled to a reward. In their law it was written, “Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them;”

and again, "There is no man that sinneth not," 1 Kings, viii. 46 ; Eccl. vii. 20. The ministration of the law, then, as the Apostle declares, 2 Cor. iii. 9, was a ministration not of righteousness but of condemnation. The law worketh wrath to every soul of man that doeth evil ; and as there is none righteous, no not one, so by the law a curse must be incurred. If this last clause of the verse be connected with the first, the meaning is, that if a man could be placed in a situation without law, he would not be exposed to wrath as guilty, for as sin is the transgression of the law, so no transgression could be charged on him who is under no law ; for, considering what the character of man is, it is only where there is no law that there is no transgression. But it rather appears that this clause stands unconnected with the preceding one, and contains a *second* reason why the law cannot convey the blessing. It renders the situation of those who are under it worse ; it adds to their transgressions on account of their innumerable breaches of it. In this view we have here another example of what occurs in verses 13 and 14 of chapter second, where, as has been shown, the 14th verse has no connexion with the 13th. In the same way, in the verse before us, the latter clause has, in this view, no dependence on the one that precedes it.

V. 16.—*Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace ; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed ; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham ; who is the father of us all.*

Having affirmed, in the end of the 13th verse, that the promise was not through the law, but through the righteousness of faith, and having, in the intermediate verses, shown that it could not be through the law, Paul here proceeds to state why faith was appointed to be the way through which it should be carried into effect. *Therefore.*—This appears to give a reason for what immediately follows, not for what goes before. Salvation, or the fulfilment of the promise, *is of faith* for this reason, namely, *that it might be of grace.* There is no other way in which it could have been completely of grace. Had salvation been given for one good thought, it would not have been altogether of grace. Paul had asserted that they who have obtained the righteousness of God by faith, are justified freely by grace, and now he affirms that salvation is of faith, for this very purpose that it might be by grace ; for except by grace—free and unmerited favour—it is not possible that any sinner, which is the character of every man, could be saved. It is grounded, then, not on obedience to law, but on the gratuitous favour of God. Grace selects its objects, its only

motive being in God, and they obtain salvation in a way that is certain, and cannot be made void by their own unworthiness and mutability, but which depends on the sovereign and immutable will of God. According to his everlasting covenant, which is ordered in all things and sure, God saves his people by grace through faith, bestowed by him whose gifts and calling are without repentance.

*To the end the promise might be sure to all the seed.*—Faith is also the only way in which the promise could be assured to all the seed. Had the promise been confined to natural descent from Abraham, his seed by faith would not have enjoyed the inheritance. *Not to that only, &c.*—This explains what goes before. The promise is thus sure, not only to his natural offspring under the legal dispensation, who are believers, but also to all of any nation who have his faith. Here it is worthy of observation, that none are supposed to be Abraham's spiritual seed, or heirs as his seed, except believers, whether they be his descendants or Gentiles. *Who is the father of us all*; that is, spiritual father both of Jewish and Gentile believers. He is equally in this sense the father of all, but of none except believers. It is only by faith that he is spiritually the father of any.



V. 17.—(*As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations,)* before him whom he believed, even God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were.

*As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations.*—According to the Apostle's interpretation of the promise, "I have made thee a father," &c., it imports a numerous spiritual offspring, as well as a numerous natural posterity. It is not by way of what is called accommodation that this is said; it is the real interpretation of the promise, whether Abraham himself understood it so or not. This interpretation of the Apostle is a key to all that is said on this subject. It shows that Abraham had a double seed, that the promise had a double meaning, and both are distinctly fulfilled. Thus, each of the three promises made to Abraham had a double fulfilment; 1. Of a numerous posterity; 2. Of God being a God to his seed; 3. Of the earthly and heavenly country. *Before him.*—He was at that moment made a father or pattern of all his natural and spiritual posterity. *In the presence of God.*—That is, though he was not actually a father, yet he was so in the presence of God, or in the purpose of God, which made it as sure as if it had already taken place. God now willed it, and the result would follow as surely as creation followed his word. *Quick-*

*eneth the dead.*—Does this refer to the literal general fact of bringing the dead to life, or to Abraham's body now dead, and Sarah's incapacity of having children at her advanced age, or to the raising of Isaac had he been sacrificed? The first appears to be the meaning, and includes the others; and the belief of it is the ground on which the others rest. Faith in God's power, as raising the dead, is a proper ground of believing any other work of power which God engages to perform, or which is necessary to be performed, in order to fulfil his word. If God raises the dead, why should Abraham look with distrust on his own body, or consider Sarah's natural incapacity to bear children? Why should he doubt that God will fulfil his promise as to his numerous seed by Isaac, even though Isaac shall be slain? God could raise him from the dead. *Callesh those things which be not as though they were.*—This does not say that God calls into existence the things that exist not, as he calls into existence the things that are. But God speaks of the things that exist not, in the same way as he speaks of the things that exist; that is, he speaks of them as existing, though they do not actually exist. And this is the way he now speaks of Abraham as the father of many nations. *I have made thee.*—God calls him now a father, though he was not

actually a father of many nations, because before God, or in God's counsel, he was such a father.

V. 18.—*Who against hope believed in hope,\* that he might become the father of many nations, according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be.*

*Against hope*, or beyond hope.—The thing was utterly beyond all that could be expected according to natural principles. *In hope*, or upon hope; that is, he believed the thing that was an object of hope. He believed the promise. Belief respects any thing that is testified, whether desirable or otherwise. But the thing testified to Abraham was an object of hope, therefore, he is said beyond hope to believe upon hope. *That he might become.*—This is explained by some as importing that Abraham believed that he should become, &c.; that is, his becoming *the father of many nations* was the object of his belief. Others explain it, that he believed the promise in order that he might become; that is, his faith was the means through which the promise was to be made good to him. Both of these are true, but the last appears to be most agreeable to the expression, and is the more important sense. He was made

\* Some place the point after believed. Who against hope believed, in hope that he might become, &c. That is, he believed the thing that was an object of hope. He believed the promise, and hoped for its accomplishment.

such a father through faith. Had he not believed the promise he would not have been made such a father. *According to that which was spoken.*—This shows that Abraham's expectation was entirely guided by the Divine promise. He had no ground to hope that he would have so numerous a posterity, or any posterity at all, but on the authority of the promise of God. This he received in its true and obvious meaning, and did not, like many, explain away, modify, or fritter it down into something less wonderful. He hoped for the very thing which the words of the promise intimated, and to the very utmost extent of the meaning of these words, *So shall thy seed be.*

V. 19.—*And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb.*

*Not weak in faith.*—This is a usual way of expressing the opposite, implying that his faith was peculiarly strong. Faith is the substance of things hoped for, inasmuch as we believe that we shall in due time be put in possession of them. It is the evidence of things not seen, as thereby we are persuaded of all the unseen things declared in Scripture. Faith thus makes future things present, and unseen things evident. *He considered not his own body.*—This is an example which ought ever to direct our faith.

There are always obstacles and difficulties in the way of faith. We should give them no more weight than if they did not exist, reflecting that it is God who is to remove them. Nothing can be a difficulty in the way of the fulfilment of God's own word. This ought to encourage us, not only with respect to ourselves, but with respect to the cause of God, in the world. The government rests on the shoulders of Emmanuel. *His own body now dead, &c.*—Had Abraham looked to any natural means, he would have staggered; but he looked only to the power of him who promised.

*V. 20.—He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God.*

*He staggered not.*—This well expresses the meaning, the word signifying to doubt or hesitate. Dr Macknight's translation is bad,—“He did not dispute.” He might have hesitated or doubted, though he did not dispute. *At the promise*, or with respect to the promise. *But was strong in faith.*—In the foregoing verse, Abraham is said not to have been weak in faith; here it is affirmed that he was strong in faith. This imports that there are degrees in faith,—a doctrine that some deny, but a doctrine which Scripture, in many places, most clearly establishes. Jesus Christ charges his disciples, Matt. vi. 30, as having little faith. They had faith;

but, unlike to Abraham's, it was deficient in strength. Our Lord, too, speaks of the comparatively strong faith of the centurion, Matt. viii. 10. He had not found so great faith in Israel. The Apostles also, addressing Jesus, pray, "Lord, increase our faith," Luke, xvii. 5. In the same manner, the Apostle Paul speaks of the "measure of faith," Rom. xii. 3; importing, that believers were endowed with different degrees of the gift. With such a profusion of instruction as the Scriptures afford on this point, it is strange that the love of theory should induce any to assert that faith is equal in all Christians. *Giving glory to God.*—How did he give glory to God? By believing that he would do what he promised, although nothing less than Almighty power could effect what was promised. This is an important thought, that we glorify God by ascribing to him his attributes, and believing that he will act according to them, notwithstanding many present appearances to the contrary.

V. 21, 22.—*And being fully persuaded that what he had promised he was able also to perform. And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness.*

*Fully persuaded* or fully assured, being strongly convinced.—This is the explanation of the way in which he gave glory to God. We might suppose that every one who professes to believe

in the attributes of God would judge as Abraham did; yet experience shows the contrary. Even the Christian does not act up to his principles on this point. The Israelites believed in God's power and favour to them; but in time of trial they failed in giving him glory by confiding in him. In like manner, Christians, in their own individual cases, do not manifest that confidence in God which their principles would lead to expect. *Also*, that is, he was as able to perform as to promise. *Wherefore*.—Because he believed God, notwithstanding all contrary appearances, his believing was imputed to him unto righteousness.

V. 23.—*Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him.*

This history of the way in which Abraham became righteous is not applicable to himself alone, but is equally applicable to all believers. The Apostle here guards us against supposing that this method of justification was peculiar to Abraham, and teaches that it is the pattern of the justification of all who shall ever find acceptance with God. The first recorded testimony respecting the justification of any sinner, as has been already observed, is that of Abraham. Others had been justified from the Fall down to his time; but it was reserved for him to possess the high privilege and distinction of being thus

the first man singled out and constituted the progenitor of the Messiah. In him all the nations of the earth were to be blessed, and, consequently, he was to be the father of all believers, who are all the children of Christ, Heb. ii. 13, and the heir of that inheritance on earth which typified the inheritance in heaven, which belongs to Jesus Christ, who is "appointed heir of all things," with whom all believers are joint heirs. And in Abraham we see that, in the first declaration of the nature of justification, it is held out as being conferred by imputation of righteousness through faith only. This passage, then, which refers to what is *written*, as well as those that precede it in this chapter, it must again be remarked, exhibits the character of the historical parts of Scripture as all divinely inspired, and all divinely arranged, in the wisdom of God, to apply to events the most important in the future dispensation. Every fact, and every circumstance which they announce, as well as the whole narrative, is ordered and dictated by him, to whom all his works are known from the beginning of the world, Acts, xv. 18.

*V. 24.—But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead.*

Righteousness shall be imputed to us, as well as to Abraham, if we have his faith. *If we believe on him that raised, &c.*—Here God is cha-



racterised by the fact that he raised up Christ. This, then, is not a mere circumstance, but it is in this very character that our faith must view God. To believe for salvation, we must believe not in God absolutely, but in God as the raiser of Jesus Christ. This faith in God, as raising up our Lord, must also import a proper view of him. It must imply a belief of the gospel, not only to the fact of a resurrection, but also as to the person and work of Christ.

*V. 25.—Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.*

*Delivered.*—The Father gave over the Son to death, delivering him into the hands of wicked men. Here we must look to a higher tribunal than that of Pilate, who delivered him into the hands of the Jews. He was delivered, by the determined counsel and foreknowledge of God. When Herod, Pilate, and the Gentiles, with the people of Israel, were gathered together against him, it was to do whatsoever God's word and counsel had determined before to be done, Acts iv. 28. The crucifixion of Christ being the greatest of all crimes, was hateful and highly provoking in the sight of God; yet it was the will of God that it should take place, in order to bring to pass the greatest good. God decreed this event, and willed that it should come to pass, and ordered circumstances in his providence in

such a way, as gave men an opportunity to carry into effect their wicked intentions. In their sin God had no part; and his determination that the deed should be done, formed no excuse for its perpetrators, nor did it in any degree extenuate their wickedness, which the Scriptures charge upon them in the fullest manner. "Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain;" Acts, ii. 23. This was an example of the same truth declared by Joseph to his brethren; "As for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good," Gen. 1. 20. *For our offences*, or on account of our offences.—This shows the need of Christ's death. It was not for an example, or for a witness merely; but for our offences. *Raised again for our justification*.—That is, he was raised that he might enter the holy place not made with hands, and present his own blood that we might be declared righteous through his death for us. As the death of Christ, according to the determinate counsel of a holy and righteous God, was a demonstration of the guilt of his people, so his resurrection was their acquittal from every charge.

It is of importance to distinguish the persons to whom the Apostle refers in this and the foregoing verse, when he says, if *we* believe, and

speaks of sin being imputed to *us*, of *our* offences and our justification. In the beginning of the chapter he uses the expression, "Abraham *our* father;" but there he is introducing an objection that might be offered by the Jews, and speaks of Abraham as his own and their progenitor. But when, in the 12th verse, he says, "*our* father Abraham," and in the 16th, "the father of *us* all," he applies these expressions not to the Jews, or the natural descendants of Abraham, but to himself and those to whom he is writing, that is, to believers, to all of whom, whether Jews or Gentiles, in every age, as walking in the same steps of Abraham's faith, they are equally applicable. And of the same persons he here speaks in the 24th and 25th verses, for whose offences Jesus was delivered, and for whose justification he was raised again. They are those whom the Father had given Him, John vi. 37, xvii. 2; Heb. ii. 13; for the effect of his death was not to depend on the contingent will of man, but was fixed by the eternal purpose of God. They are those of whom it was promised to the Redeemer, that when he should make his soul an offering for sin, he should see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied,—those who are or shall be saved, and called with an holy calling, not according to their works, but according to God's purpose and grace which was given them

in Christ Jesus before the world began, 2d Tim. i. 9,—those who have the faith of God's elect, who are brought by him to the acknowledgment of the truth which is after godliness, who have the hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised from eternity to their Head and Surety, Titus, i. 1, 2. No one, then, is entitled to rank himself, or to consider that he is of the number of those to whom the Apostle's words are here applicable, unless he has obtained precious faith in the righteousness of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ. Yet the expression *our Saviour* is often used by persons who reject God's testimony concerning him, and, consequently, have neither part nor lot in the matter of salvation.

Having substituted himself in the place of sinners, Jesus Christ suffered in his own person the punishment of sin conformably to that declaration, In the day that thou eatest thou shalt surely die. He came forth from among the dead in testimony that the threatening of God was accomplished, and as a pledge of the acceptance of his sacrifice, and that by his obedience unto death Divine justice was satisfied, the law honoured and magnified, and that eternal life was awarded to those for whom he died, whose sins he had borne in his own body on the tree, 1st Pet. ii. 24. He was quickened by the Spirit, 1st Pet. iii. 18;

by whom he was also justified, 1 Tim. iii. 16, from every charge that could be alleged against him as the Surety of them whose iniquities he bore. The justification, therefore, of his people, which includes not only the pardon of their sins, but also their title to the eternal inheritance, was begun in his death, and perfected in his resurrection. He wrought their justification by his death, but its efficacy depended on his resurrection. By his death he paid their debt; in his resurrection he received their acquittance. He rose to assure to them the right to eternal life, fully to discover it, and to establish it in his own person, for all who are the members of his body.

## CHAPTER V.

ROMANS, V. 1-21.

THE Apostle describes in this chapter the blessed accompaniments, the security, and the foundation of justification. This last branch of the subject is interwoven with an account of the entrance of sin and death into the world; while a parallel is drawn between the first and the second Adam in their opposite tendencies and influences. By the first came sin, condemnation, and death; by the second, righteousness, justification, and life. From this comparison occasion is taken to show why God had made the promulgation of the written law to intervene betwixt the author of condemnation and the author of justification. On the one hand, the extent, the evil, and the demerit of sin, and the obstructions raised up by law and justice to man's recovery, were thus made fully manifest; while, on the other hand, the superabundant riches of Divine grace, in its complete ascendancy and victory over them, in the way

of righteousness, were displayed to the greatest advantage, and with the fullest effect.

*V. 1.—Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

*Therefore.*—This particle of inference draws its conclusion from the whole preceding discussion concerning justification by faith, though it may have a more immediate reference to the nearest preceding context. The Apostle having fully proved that salvation is by grace, and that it is by faith, now shows the consequences of this doctrine.

*Justified by faith.*—This expression is elliptical: faith must be understood as inclusive of its object. This is very usual in all cases where the thing elliptically expressed is frequently spoken of, and therefore sufficiently explained by the elliptical expression. It is not by faith, abstractly considered, that we are justified, nor even by faith in every thing that God reveals. It is faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Even this phrase itself, namely, faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, is still elliptical, and supposes the knowledge of what is to be believed with respect to Christ. It is not believing in his existence, but believing on him as revealed in the Scriptures, implying a knowledge of his person and work. In the same manner, as we have the phrase “justified by faith,” we have the phrase justi-

fied by the blood of Christ. As, in the former case, faith implies its object,—so, in the latter, it is implied that we are justified by faith in the blood of Christ. The blood of Christ justifies by being the object of belief and of trust.

*We have peace with God.*—This shows that all men, till they are justified, are at war with God, and that he is at war with them. But when they are justified by faith, the wrath of God, which abideth on those who believe not on his Son, John, iii. 36, is turned away, and they cease to be enemies to God. Thus peace, succeeding hostility, brings with it every blessing; for there is no middle place for the creature between the love and the wrath of God. This peace, then, arises from righteousness—the imputation of the righteousness of God by which the believer is justified, and a sense of peace obtained. While guilt remains in the conscience, enmity will also rankle in the heart; for so long as men look upon their sins as unpardoned, and upon God as the avenger of transgressions, they must regard him as being to them a consuming fire. But when they view God in Christ reconciling them to himself, not imputing their iniquities to them, peace, according to the measure of faith, is established in the conscience. This never can be experienced by going about to establish our own righteousness.



If any man have peace in his conscience, it must flow from Christ's righteousness—it must be the effect of that righteousness which God has "created," Isa. xlv. 8; and of which the Spirit, when he comes, brings with him the conviction, John, xvi. 8. Resting on this righteousness, the believer sees that God is at peace with him, perfectly reconciled. The belief of this satisfies his conscience, which, being purged by blood, Heb. ix. 14, he is freed from guilty fears, and reconciled to God. Through this sense of the pardon of sin, and of friendship with God, the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keeps his heart and mind through Christ Jesus. The maintenance of this peace, by preserving the conscience, by continual application to the blood of Christ, free from guilt, is the main point in the believer's walk with God, and the powerful spring of his obedience. In the New Testament, God is frequently denominated "the God of peace." The Apostle prays that the Lord himself may give his people peace by all means, and enjoins that the peace of God should rule in the hearts of believers, to which they are also called in one body, and that they should be thankful. Peace is the fruit of the Spirit, and the kingdom of God is righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.

*Through our Lord Jesus Christ.*—Peace comes

through the death of Jesus Christ. The faith, therefore, by which it is obtained, must refer to him who made peace through the blood of his cross. He alone, as the one mediator, can make peace between God, who is holy, and man, who is sinful. Three covenants have been established by God, or three ways of communication with man. The first was the covenant of nature, the second the covenant of the law, the third the covenant of the gospel. Under the first covenant, man being in a state of innocence, needed no mediator. Under the second there was a mediator simply of communication, and not of reconciliation—a mediator as to the exterior, or a messenger who goes between two parties, a simple depository of words spoken on the one side or the other, without having any part in the interior or essence of the covenant, of which he was neither the founder nor the bond. Under the third covenant, Jesus Christ is a true mediator of reconciliation, who has produced a real peace between God and man, and is the founder of their mutual communion. “He is our peace.” It is established by the new covenant in his hands, and is everlasting, being made through the blood of that everlasting covenant. “The Lord is well pleased for his righteousness’ sake,” Is. xlii. 21. “The work of righteousness shall be *peace*, and the effect

of righteousness, quietness and assurance for ever," Is. xxxii. 17. This peace then is through Jesus Christ and his righteousness, which brings this quietness and assurance. He is the king of righteousness and king of peace. In parting from his disciples before his death, he bequeathed to them peace. "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you." And when he met them again after his resurrection, his first salutation to them was, "Peace be unto you."

*V. 2.—By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in the hope of the glory of God.*

We have *access into grace* as well as peace. The one is distinguished from the other. In what, then, do they differ? Peace denotes a particular blessing; access into grace, or a state of favour, implies general blessings, among which peace and all other privileges are included. And as we are justified by means of faith, and have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, so likewise it is through him that we enter into this state of grace; for it is through him that we have access by one Spirit unto the Father, by that new and living way which he hath consecrated for us through the veil; that is to say, his flesh. We have access to a mercy-seat, to which we are invited to come freely; and boldness and access with confidence by the faith of Jesus—boldness to come to the throne of grace,

and to enter into the holiest by his blood. And as it is by him we enter into this state of grace, so by him we *stand* in it, accepted before God, 1 Pet. v. 12; secured, according to his everlasting covenant, that we shall not be cast down; but are fixed in this state of perfect acceptance, conferred by sovereign grace, brought into it by unchangeable love, and kept in it by the power of a faithful God. "They shall be my people, and I will be their God." "I will not turn away from them to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me." Jer. xxxii. 38, 40.

*And rejoice.*—This is an additional blessing. The word here translated rejoice signifies to glory or exult, and is the same that in the following verse is rendered "to glory." It may designate not only the excess of joy possessed by the soul in the contemplation of the future inheritance, but the language of triumph that expresses this joy, which is properly meant by glorying. The Christian should speak nothing boastingly, as far as concerns himself; but he has no reason to conceal his sense of his high destination as a son of God, and an heir of glory. In this he ought to exult, in this he ought to glory—and, in obedience to his Lord's command, to rejoice, because his name is written in heaven. The hope of eternal salva-

tion through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ cannot but produce joy ; for as there can be no true joy without such a hope, so it carries with it the very essence of joy. Joy springing from faith is called the joy of faith, Phil. i. 25, and is made a distinguishing characteristic of the Christian. Phil. iii. 3.

“Where Christ is truly seen,” says Luther, on the Galatians, p. 85, “there must needs be full and perfect joy in the Lord, with peace of conscience, which most certainly thus thinketh :—Although I am a sinner by the law, and under condemnation of the law, yet I despair not, I die not, because Christ liveth, who is both my righteousness and my everlasting life. In that righteousness and life I have no sin, no fear, no sting of conscience, no care of death. I am, indeed, a sinner, as touching this present life, and the righteousness thereof, as the child of Adam ; where the law accuseth me, death reigneth over me, and at length would devour me. But I have another righteousness and life above this life, which is Christ, the Son of God, who knoweth no sin nor death, but righteousness, and life eternal ; by whom this, my body, being dead, and brought into dust, shall be raised up again, and delivered from the bondage of the law, and sin, and shall be sanctified together with the spirit.”

*In the hope of the glory of God.*—The form of expression here will equally apply to the glory that God bestows on others, and to his own glory. The view and enjoyment of God's glory is the hope of believers. It is the glory that shall be revealed in them when they shall be glorified together with Christ—when they shall behold the glory which the Father hath given to the Son, and which the Son gives to them, John, xvii. 22, 24. Thus, faith relies on the truth of what God has promised, and hope waits for the enjoyment of it. This hope is full of rejoicing, because every thing that it looks for and draws its joy from, depends on the truth and faithfulness of a covenant God. There can be no failure on his part, and consequently on the believer's no disappointment.

Here it should be particularly observed, that before saying one word of the fruits produced by the believer, the Apostle describes him as rejoicing in the hope of the glory of God. He represents him as drawing no motive of consolation but from a view of God in Christ, whom he has received as his Saviour by faith, and this is the true source of his hope and joy. The disciples, after the day of Pentecost, as soon as they heard the word that Peter preached, gladly embraced it, and did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart. In the same way

the Eunuch rejoiced, and the Jailor, when Christ was preached to them, the moment they believed. This hope is, indeed, capable of confirmation ; but if it has not its origin in Jesus Christ, and his sacrifice alone, it is a false hope. As soon as a man believes the gospel of Christ, he ought to imitate the faith of Abraham, and give glory to God, resting securely on the sure foundation which is the basis of the hope ; and he never can acquire a better, or a different title to glory, than that of which he is in possession in the moment when he believes, although as he grows in grace he perceives it more distinctly. Paul, while he urges the brethren at Colosse to a higher degree of conformity, in many particulars, to the will of God, yet gives thanks to the Father, who had already made them meet for the inheritance of the saints in light, which every man is, like the thief on the cross, in the moment when he is united to Christ ; for then he is justified by faith, and has peace with God. Christians are characterised as holding fast the beginning of their confidence, and the rejoicing of their hope firm unto the end. The beginning of their confidence and hope of salvation rested wholly on the person and righteousness of Jesus Christ, the Surety of the new covenant. It is true, that at the commencement of their new life, faith is often weak, and its object seen indis-

tinctly. Love, and joy, and hope cannot transcend the faith from which they flow. Hence the propriety of that prayer by all the disciples of Jesus, "Lord, increase our faith;" hence also the necessity of using diligence in the work and labour of love, to the full assurance of hope unto the end, Heb. vi. 11.

*V. 3.—And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also : knowing that tribulation worketh patience.*

Not only does the believer rejoice in hope of future glory, but he rejoices even in tribulations. This rejoicing, however, is not in tribulations considered in themselves, but considered in their effects. It is only the knowledge of the effects of afflictions, and of their being appointed by his Heavenly Father, that enables the Christian to rejoice in them. Being in themselves an evil, not joyous but grievous, they would not otherwise be a matter of rejoicing, but of regret. But viewed as proceeding from his Heavenly Father's love, Heb. xii. 6, Rev. iii. 19, they are so far from depriving him of his joy that they tend to increase it. The way to the cross was to his Saviour the way to the crown, and he knows that through much tribulation he must enter into the kingdom of God, Acts, xiv. 22. The greatest tribulations are among those things that work together for his good. God comforts him in the midst of his sorrows, 2 Cor. i. 4.



Tribulation, even death itself, which is numbered among his privileges, 1st Cor. iii. 22, shall not separate him from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus his Lord. The Apostle Peter addresses believers as greatly rejoicing in the hope of salvation, though now, if need be, they are in heaviness through manifold temptations.

Tribulation worketh or effecteth *patience*. Christians should be well instructed on this point, and should have it continually in their eye; their happiness is greatly concerned in it. If they forget the end and tendency of afflictions they will murmur like the Israelites. Patience is a habit of endurance, and Christian patience implies submission to the will of God. Paul says here that affliction worketh patience, and James, i. 3, says, that the trying of faith worketh patience. This proves that the afflictions of a Christian are intended as a trial of his faith. What by the one Apostle is called tribulation, is by the other called trial of faith. The effect of affliction is the working of patience, which is so necessary, as we are all naturally impatient and unwilling to submit unreservedly to the dispensations of God. Patience gives occasion to the exercise of the graces of the Spirit, and of submission under afflictions to the will of God.

V. 4.—*And patience, experience; and experience, hope.*

*Experience*.—The Greek word signifies trial

or proof. Here it means proof; for trial may detect a hypocrite as well as manifest a saint. But proof implies that the trial has proved the genuineness of the tried person. And proof worketh *hope*. That is, when the genuineness of our profession is manifested by being proved, our hope of enjoying the glory promised to the genuine people of God is confirmed. Hope is here introduced a second time. This again should be carefully noticed. At first, as we have seen, it springs solely from a view of the mediation and work of our Lord Jesus Christ. Here it acquires a new force from the proof the believer has of the reality of his union with the Saviour, from the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ. Thus the "good hope through grace" must be produced solely by faith, and must be confirmed, not produced, by the fruits of faith.

*V. 5.—And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us.*

*Hope maketh not ashamed.*—This may import either that hope will not be disappointed, or that hope will not allow us to be ashamed of its object. Various passages speak of the believer as not being put to shame in the day of retribution; and the expression here is generally interpreted to signify that hope will not be disappointed,

but will receive the object of its anticipation. This is an important truth, yet many things incline us to understand the Apostle as speaking of the usual effect of hope as exemplified in the life of a Christian; and that it is not the future effect of hope in believers, but the present effect of it, as it is the present effect of the other particulars mentioned, that the Apostle refers to. Besides, the primary signification of the word in the original is, not to disappoint, but to shame, or put to shame, or make ashamed. Paul here evidently speaks of hope as a general principle, which in every instance, and on all subjects, has the effect ascribed to it. It is its nature, with regard to every thing which is its object, to destroy shame, and excite to an open avowal, and even glorying in it, though it may be a thing of which others may be ashamed, and which is ridiculed in the world. The experience of every Christian confirms this view. When is he inclined to be ashamed of the gospel? Not when his hopes are high, his faith unwavering, and his impressions of future glory strong. It is when his hopes fade and grow weak. Just in proportion as he has strong hope will he make an open and a bold profession of the truth. Here, then, by a well-known figure, the assertion before us appears to import that, so far from being ashamed, believers glory and

boast. Hope causes Christians, instead of being ashamed of Christ and his word (which without hope they would be), to glory and proclaim their prospects before the world, Gal. vi. 14; 1st Peter, i. 6-8, v. 1; 1 John, iii. 2. They glory in the cross of Christ through hope. This shows the great importance of keeping our hope clear. If we suffer it to flag or grow faint, we shall be ashamed of it before men, to which, from the enmity of the world against the gospel, there is much temptation. Accordingly, our blessed Lord, who knew what was in man, has, in the most solemn and awful manner, warned his disciples against it; and the Apostle Peter enjoins on believers to add to their faith *virtue*—courage to profess it.

*Because.*—This casual particle may be understood to intimate the reason why hope makes not ashamed, or to give an additional reason why Christians are not ashamed. Agreeably to the latter interpretation, hope is one reason, and then another is subjoined, and certainly the love of God is a strong reason to prevent us from being ashamed of the Gospel. *Love of God.*—This phrase in itself is ambiguous, and according to the connexion or other circumstances, it must be understood, in its different occurrences, to refer either to God's love to us, or to our love to God, which are two entirely distinct things.

Strictly speaking, God's love to us is in himself, and the love that he pours into our hearts is love to him. The connexion here may incline us to understand the phrase in the sense of God's love to us; for the Apostle immediately proceeds to show God's love to his people. In this view, it coincides with such expressions as "In this was manifested the love of God towards us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him;" and, "We have known and believed the love that God hath to us," 1 John, iv. 9, 16. We cannot be beforehand with God in love, and we must perceive his love to make us love him. The first feeling of love springs up in the heart from a view of his grace and mercy to us in Jesus Christ. Yet the phraseology of the connexion, as speaking of God's love to us, is not inconsistent with the interpretation that the love of God here means our love to God, because his love to us is the foundation of our love to God, and it is a view of his love to us that produces and increases our love to God. And when the Apostle speaks of love to God being infused into the hearts of believers, it is quite in unison with his grounding it on God's love to us.

*Poured out.*—This refers to the abundant measure of the sense of the love of God to us,

or the gift of love to God, which is communicated to his people, and poured into their hearts, through all the faculties of their souls, moving and captivating their affections. *By the Holy Ghost.*—This shows that love to God is the gift of God, and it never exists in the human heart till the Holy Spirit implant it. “All men naturally hate God,” Rom. viii. 7; and it is only when they behold his love, in the gift of his Son, that they repent. *Given unto us.*—The gift of the Holy Ghost, in his operation in the heart, in his sanctifying influences, was not confined to Apostles and Evangelists, but is enjoyed in common by all the saints, in all of whom the Holy Spirit dwells, and who are habitations of God through the Spirit, 1 Cor. iii. 16; Eph. ii. 22; Rom. viii. 9. Here we see that every thing in us that is good is the fruit of the Spirit of God. The love of God is said to be shed abroad by the Spirit in our hearts. Man possesses by nature no holy disposition. The lowest degree of true humility, godly sorrow for sin, and love to God, are not to be found in any of the children of Adam, till they are enlightened by the Spirit through the knowledge of the Gospel. Though sinners should hear ten thousand times of the love of God in the gift of his Son, they never are properly affected by it, till the Holy Spirit enters into

their hearts, and till it is produced by the truth through the Spirit. Here also we may see the distinct work of the Holy Spirit in the economy of redemption. Each of the persons of the Godhead sustains a peculiar office in the salvation of sinners, and it is the office of the Spirit to convert and sanctify those for whom Christ died.

What fulness and variety of instruction and consolation are contained in the first five verses of this chapter! The work of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, is exhibited all severally acting, as God alone can act, in the various parts of man's salvation. The righteousness of God is imputed to the believer, who is therefore justified, and pronounced by the Judge of all the earth righteous. As righteous, he has peace with God, and free access to him through Jesus Christ; and thus introduced into the favour of God, he stands in a justified state, rejoicing in hope of future glory. Being justified, he is also sanctified, and enabled to glory even in present afflictions. He enjoys the indwelling of the Holy Ghost, through whose divine influence the love of God is infused into his soul. Here, then, are the peace, the joy, the triumph of the Christian. Here are faith, hope, and love, the three regulators of the Christian's life. Faith is the great and only

means of obtaining every privilege, because it unites the soul to Christ, and receives all out of his fulness. Hope cheers the passage of the believer with the expectation of promised blessings to be accomplished in eternal life, and is thus the anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, which retains it firm and enables it to ride out all the storms and troubles of life. Love is the renewal of the image of God in the soul and the true principle of obedience. "The end of the commandment is love, out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned." Faith is thus the root of the whole. Faith in the resurrection of Christ produces a good conscience, 1st Peter, iii. 21; faith purifies the heart, Acts, xv. 9; faith works by love, Gal. v. 6.

*V. 6.—For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.*

*For*—appears to assign the reason of our love to God, not the reason that the hope of a Christian will not disappoint him. Having spoken of the love of God shed abroad in our hearts, the Apostle naturally declares the ground of our love. Though the Holy Ghost inspires that love, yet in doing so he shows us the grounds on which it rests, or the reasons why it should exist. In making us love God, he makes us perceive the grounds on which we



ought to love him. This shows us also another important fact, namely, that the Holy Spirit works in his people according to their constitution or the nature that he has given them; and, in giving us proper feelings and affections, he discovers to us the proper objects towards which they ought to be excited. The word of God through the Spirit, both in conversion and growth of grace, acts according to the original constitution that God has been pleased to bestow on the Christian.

*Without strength, or weak.*—Christ died for us while we were still unable and unwilling to obey him, without ability to save ourselves. This weakness, or inability, no doubt, is sinful; but it is our inability, not our guilt, that the Apostle designates here. When we were unable to keep the law of God, or do any thing towards our deliverance from Divine wrath, Christ interposed. He died for those whom he came to redeem, when they were still unable and unwilling to obey him.

*In due time.*—At the time appointed of the Father, Gal. iv. 2, 4, the fruits of the earth are gathered in their season; so in his season, that is, the time appointed, Christ died. 1st Tim. ii. 6. Or it may mean, he gave himself for us when we were without strength, and ungodly; for had he not given himself for us in that sea-

son, we never could have been saved. Without his gift of himself for us we must have for ever continued ungodly. On this account, then, Christ may here be said to give himself for us *in due time*, that is, in the season of our utmost need. *Ungodly*.—Christ died for us, considered as ungodly. There are none who are not of this character by nature. It was not for those who were in some degree godly, or doing in some measure the will of God, that Christ died. He died for his people as ungodly. It is by faith in his death that they are made godly.

*V. 7.*—*For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die.*

*For*.—This introduces a fact that heightens and illustrates the love of God to sinners. A *righteous* or just man.—A just man is distinguished here from a good or beneficent man. They are quite distinct characters among men. A just man is approved—a benevolent man is loved. Scarcely, however, would any one give his life for the former, yet perhaps some one might for the latter. *Scarcely*.—This gives the reason why the Apostle uses the word *righteous* or *just*, when he denies that any one would die in his stead, because he does not mean to make the denial universal. “*Even*.”—This is designed to qualify the verb *to die*, not the verb *to dare*, though it stands immediately before it.

It is not even dare, but *dare even to die*. This intimates that to die is a thing to which we are of all things most averse. It is the greatest trial of love, John, xv. 13. "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us," 1 John, iii. 16.

V. 8.—*But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.*

*His love.*—Here God's love to us is distinguished in the original as *his own love*, which in this place takes away all ambiguity from the expression. *Yet sinners.*—This is literally true with respect to all who are saved since Christ's death, and is substantially true of all who were saved before it. This may be said of Abel as well as of Paul. Christ died for him as a sinner. It was Christ's death through which Abel was accepted. *For us.*—Not for us as including all men, but for those believers and himself whom the Apostle was addressing, and this equally applies to all believers, to all who are or shall be in Christ. Christ's death for us as sinners, in an astonishing manner, *commends, manifests, or exhibits* God's love to us.

V. 9.—*Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.*

If God's love to us were such that Christ died for us when we were sinners, *much more*, when we are perfectly righteous through that death,

will he save us from future punishment. *Justified by his blood.*—This shows, that when we are said to be justified by *faith*, faith includes its object, and imports that we are not saved by faith as a virtue. It shows also that Christ's death was not that of a mere witness to the truth which he declared, but that it was for sin. Dr. Macknight's explanation of this verse is as follows:—*'Much more then, being now allowed to live under the new covenant, through the shedding of his blood, we shall be saved from future punishment through him, if we behave well under that covenant.'* In his note he adds,—*'Here justified by his blood means, that, in the view of Christ's shedding his blood, Adam and Eve were respited from death, and being allowed to live, he and they were placed under a new covenant, by which they might regain immortality.'* And this follows naturally from what he gives as the meaning of the foregoing verse—*'His own love to men, God hath raised above all human love, because, we being still sinners, Christ died for us, to procure us a temporary life on earth, under a better covenant than the first.'* On such interpretations it is unnecessary to remark. They exhibit a picture of midnight darkness. Dr. Macknight supposes that it is here implied that some are said to be justified who are not saved from wrath. But

this is not the fact. Justification is spoken of as having taken place, and salvation is spoken of as future—not because any shall be punished who have been justified, but because the wrath spoken of is future. The salvation of the Christian from wrath is said to be future, in reference to the time of the general execution of wrath in the day of judgment. It is evidently implied in the expression, that they who are justified shall never be punished. This expression, justified by his blood, gives a most awful view of the infinite evil of sin, of the strict justice of God, and of his faithfulness in carrying into execution the first sentence, “In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.” Without the shedding of that blood, and entering with it into the holy place, Christ could not have obtained eternal salvation for those who had sinned. On the other hand, what an astonishing view is thus given of the love of God, who spared not his Son, but delivered him up for his people, and who with him will freely give them all things.

The divine wisdom is admirable in the manner in which the Scriptures are written. It is not without design that inspiration varies the phraseology respecting justification. Each variety is calculated to meet a different abuse of the doctrine. The human heart is so prone to self-righteousness, that the very doctrine of faith

has been made to assume a legal sense. Faith is made a work, and the office assigned to it is not merely the medium of communicating righteousness, but it is made to stand for a certain value, either real or supposed. Had inspiration never varied the expressions, and always used the phrase *justified by faith*, though there would have been no real ground to conclude that faith has in itself any intrinsic value, yet evidence to the contrary would not have been exhibited in the manner in which it is held forth by varying the diction. Instead of "justified by faith," we here read *justified by the blood of Christ*. This shows, that when we are said to be justified by faith, it is not by faith as a work of the law, but by faith as a medium: that is, faith in the blood of Christ. To the same purpose also is the expression, in the following verse, *reconciled to God by the death of his Son*. On the other hand, there are some who, strongly impressed with the great evil of making faith a work, have plunged into a contrary extreme, and are unwilling to look at the subject in any light but that in which it is represented in the phrase "justified by his blood," as if justification were independent of faith, or as if faith was merely an accidental or unimportant thing in justification. This also is a great error. Faith is as necessary in justification as the sacrifice of

Christ itself, but necessary for a different purpose. The blood of Christ is the price that has value in itself. Faith is a necessary medium, through the Divine appointment. Again, we have *justified freely by grace*, chap. iii. 24. Self-righteousness is fruitful in expedients. It is difficult to put it to silence. It will admit that justification is by faith in its own legal sense, and that it is through Christ's blood, as a general price for the sins of all men; but it holds that every man must do something to entitle him to the benefits of Christ's sacrifice. Here, then, the phrase *justification by grace* comes in to cut off every evasion.

Another variety of phraseology on this subject we have in the expression *justified by Christ*, Gal. ii. 17. This points to the ground of our justification, or our union with Christ. We are accounted perfectly righteous, having paid the debt of sin, and having fulfilled the whole law, by our union or oneness with Christ, as we were sinners by our natural connexion with Adam. It is of immense importance to the satisfaction of the mind of the believer, constantly and steadfastly to consider himself as a member of Christ's body—as truly a part of him. He rose for our justification. When he was justified from the sins which he took on him by having suffered for them, and when he had fulfilled the

law, we were justified in his justification. We are therefore said not merely to be pardoned through Christ, but to be justified by him. We have suffered all the punishment due to our sins, we have kept every precept of the law, because he with whom we are *one* has done so. It is also worthy of remark, that while the Apostle speaks of being justified by Christ, he had, in the preceding verse, spoken of being justified by the faith of Christ. This shows that the way in which our union with Christ is effected is by faith.

*V. 10.—For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.*

*Enemies.*—It greatly enhances the love of God, that he gave his Son for us while we were yet his enemies. Had we discovered any symptoms of willingness to obey him, or any degree of love to him, his love to us would not have been so astonishing. But it is in this light only that the proud heart of man is willing to view his obligations to redeeming love. He will not look upon himself as totally depraved and helpless. He desires to do something on his part to induce God to begin his work in him by his Spirit. But Christ died for his people when they were the enemies of God, and he calls them to the knowledge of himself when they are his enemies. Here, then, is the love



of God. At the time when Christ died for us, we were not his friends, but his enemies.

*Reconciled to God by the death of his Son.*—the word rendered reconciled signifies to change the state of matters between persons at variance, by removing their grounds of difference. The divine word and declarations, as well as the divine perfections, forbid us to imagine that God will clear the guilty. In order, then, to make reconciliation with God, satisfaction must be made to his justice. What is meant here is not our laying aside our enmity to God, but God's laying aside his enmity to us, on account of the death of his Son. It is true that we lay aside our enmity to God, when we see that he has laid aside his enmity to us, and never till then will we do so; but what is here meant is, that God is reconciled to us. In Scripture this is spoken of as our being reconciled to God. We are reconciled to God when he is pacified towards us through his Son, in whom we believe. This is quite agreeable to the use of the term in Scripture with respect to other cases, 1st Sam. xxix. 4; Matth. v. 23, 24. Socinians, however, maintain that reconciliation between God and man consists only in bending and pacifying the heart of man towards God, and not in averting the just anger of God. This error, arising from their denial of the satisfaction

made by Jesus Christ, is refuted by the consideration that God pardons our sins; whence it follows, that he was angry with us, and the redemption of Jesus Christ is declared to be by a propitiatory sacrifice, which clearly proves that God was angry. To this the idea of a sacrifice necessarily leads, for a sacrifice is offered to pacify God towards men, and not to reconcile men to God. Aaron was commanded to make an atonement for the congregation, for there was wrath gone out from the Lord.—“And he stood between the living and the dead, and the plague was stayed,” Numbers, xvi. 46. God’s anger was thus turned away by making this atonement. In David’s time, by offering burnt-offerings and peace-offerings, the Lord was entreated for the land, and the plague was stayed from Israel. By this it is clear, that the primary intention of such sacrifices, and consequently of the priest who offered them, immediately respect the reconciling of God. The same is evident from the following passages:—“Thou hast forgiven the iniquity of thy people; thou hast covered all their sin. Selah. Thou hast taken away all thy wrath; thou hast turned from the fierceness of thine anger,” Psalm, lxxxv. 2, 3. “Though thou was angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortedst me,” Isa. xii. 1. “I will establish my covenant with

thee ; and thou shalt know that I am the Lord : That thou mayest remember, and be confounded, and never open thy mouth any more because of thy shame, when I am pacified (reconciled, Lev. viii. 15, xvi. 20 ; 2d Chron. xxix. 24) toward thee for all that thou hast done, saith the Lord God," Ezek. xvi. 63.

All men being sinners, are, in themselves, while in unbelief, under the displeasure of God, who cannot look upon iniquity, Heb. i. 13, and are by nature children of wrath, or of the judgment of God. But as viewed in Christ, and in relation to his death, the elect are the objects of God's everlasting love, and this love in his good time takes effect. He sends his Son to be a propitiatory sacrifice for them, thus making satisfaction to his justice, and removing every obstacle to his being reconciled to them. He unites them to the Son of his love, and in him, clothed with his righteousness, they become the children of God, and then in themselves the proper objects of his love. The ministry committed to the Apostles is called the ministry of reconciliation. Men are besought to be reconciled to God from the consideration of his having made him who knew no sin to be sin for his people. Here is a double reconciliation—namely, of God to men, and of men to God. The latter is urged from the consideration of the former,

and this consideration is effectual for all for whom the reconciliation was made. The whole of this reconciliation is through the death of his Son. Thus does God call his people with a holy calling. He invites them to friendship with himself through an all-sufficient atonement; and they lay aside their enmity to him when they see that God has laid aside his anger against them. Thus they are reconciled to him through the death of his Son.

What in the preceding verse is spoken of as the *blood* of Christ, is here spoken of as his *death*. These varied terms are useful to express the idea in such a manner that it cannot be evaded. Christ's blood was an *atonement*, as it was his *death*. This shows that no degree of suffering would have been sufficient as an atonement for our sins without the actual death of the sacrifice, according to the original sentence against man. Jesus Christ might have suffered all that he did suffer without a total extinction of life. But he must not only suffer—he must also die. This phraseology, then, is calculated to meet the error of those Christians, who, from a desire of magnifying the efficacy of the blood of Christ, have said that one drop of it would have been sufficient to save. Had one drop been sufficient, two drops of it would never have been shed.

*Saved by his life.*—If we were reconciled by

his death, much more shall we be saved by his life. Some find a difficulty in this, as if it implied that the atonement and price of redemption were not complete at the death of Christ. But the Apostle is not speaking on that point. He is speaking of the security of the believer from any danger, by Christ as alive. The meaning is, we shall be saved by him as existing alive, or as living, Heb. vii. 25. We need Christ raised from the dead to intercede for our daily transgressions, and to save us from wrath. The efficacy of the death and the intercession of Jesus Christ have the same objects and the same extent, John, xvii. 9. He intercedes for all those for whom he died. "It is Christ that died, yea, rather that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us," Rom. viii. 34—*For us*—that is, for those whom the Apostle had addressed as *beloved of God, saints*, chap. i. 7, and all that are such.

Two comparisons are made in this passage, one between the past and the present state of believers; they were first the enemies, now they are the friends of God. The other is between the past and the present condition of Christ; he was dead, now he is alive. And the proposition that unites these two is, that reconciliation with God is entirely owing to the death of

Christ as its meritorious cause. Since, then, the death of the Redeemer could produce so great an effect as the reconciliation to himself of those who were the enemies of the Most High, what room can there be to doubt that the life of Christ is sufficient to accomplish what is less difficult; that is to say, to obtain the continuation of the Divine friendship and benevolence for those whose reconciliation has been already purchased at a price of such infinite cost? By the death which he suffered in their place, they are freed from condemnation; the rigour of the law having had its course, and having received its execution by the punishment of their sins in him, and thus they are saved from the effects of wrath. By his resurrection, his life, and his entrance into eternal glory, the reward reserved for his work as Mediator, they become partakers of that glory. "In my father's house are many mansions. I go to prepare a place for you." "Because I live, ye shall live also." "Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me." Thus Jesus Christ, who was delivered for the offences of his people, was raised again for their justification; and this unparalleled love of God, who has not spared his well-beloved Son, is the surest foundation for the absolute and unlimited

confidence in him of every man who, renouncing his own righteousness, submits to his righteousness. At the same time, the necessity of the shedding of blood infinitely precious, in order to the justification of believers, is the strongest proof of the infinite evil of sin, and of the infinite purity and awful justice of God. It shows the extreme difficulty there was in reconciling God to man, as it could only be done by a satisfaction to his justice, which could not be accomplished but by the death of his only begotten Son.

*V. 11.—And not only so, but we also joy in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.*

*Not only so.*—That is, we shall not only escape the wrath to come, but we have such prospects, that we rejoice in God. The measure of excess is future glory above mere exemption from misery. These two things are entirely distinct, and afford distinct grounds of thanksgiving. *Joy in God.*—It was before declared that believers have peace with God, that they have access to him, and that they rejoice in the hope of his glory. Now the Apostle represents them as arrived at the fountain-head, looking through all the blessings conferred on them, and rejoicing in God himself as the source of them all. The Christian's joy is all in God. He exults in his prospects, but all are ascribed to God, and not to

his own merit. God is the great and ultimate object of his joy. "My soul shall make her boast in the Lord." "O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together." "I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation." "The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance, my portion for ever. I will go unto the altar of God, unto God my exceeding joy." The sentiment of the love of God, in so great a salvation, and of joy in him, is more deeply impressed upon the believer, by considering the rock from which he has been hewn, and the hole of the pit from which he has been dug. In the above verses, the former situation of those who are saved is declared in the strongest language. They were WITHOUT STRENGTH, UNGODLY, SINNERS, UNDER WRATH, ENEMIES OF GOD. If such, then, was their original condition, what reason have they not only to rejoice in the hope of glory, but above all in the goodness and mercy of God, who has now reconciled them to himself. Phil. iii. 1; iv. 4.

*Through our Lord Jesus Christ.*—Joy in God, with all those unspeakable blessings above enumerated, are again and again declared to come by him, through whom God manifests his love, and is reconciled to his people. The name of Jesus Christ being here introduced so often, should be especially remarked. The Christian



has joy and glorying in God only through Christ; without Christ, God could not be viewed as a friend. He must be an object of hatred. Our friendly relation to God is all through Christ. *Atonement*, rather reconciliation, according to the original, as in the foregoing verse.—Reconciliation has been made through the death of Christ. Believers have *accepted*, or received that reconciliation. But it is not of themselves that they have received or accepted this reconciliation; it is by Christ. Christ has not only made the reconciliation, but he makes his people receive it.

We now come to the second division of this chapter, from verse 12 to 19. Having spoken of justification by faith, and having called our attention to several points connected with it, the Apostle now speaks of it, as it was figuratively exhibited in the condemnation of the human race in Adam. He first directs attention to the one man by whom sin was brought into the world, and declares that death came by sin. This necessarily imports that death is the lot of all that sin, and of none but such as are sinners. If death entered because of sin, it could affect none who were not sinners. But the Apostle does not leave this to be inferred by others, although this inference is both necessary and obvious. He draws it himself. “So death

passed upon all men, for that all have sinned ;” thus plainly asserting that all are sinners upon whom death passes. Every step in this process is natural and obvious. We may trace the very train in the Apostle’s mind. We may see the reason of every subjoined expression. Having said that all are sinners who die, it immediately occurs to him that this would appear strange to some ; he proceeds, therefore, to show how all have sinned. This he does by observing, that sin was in the world before the law of Moses, and that it had existed from Adam until the law was given. But this, as he observes, could not have been the case, had not law existed ; “ for sin is not imputed where there is no law.” What, then, is the evidence that sin existed before the law of Moses ? The evidence is, that death reigned. And what is the evidence that sin existed in infants ? The evidence is, that death reigned over them. If death came upon man by sin, it could not reign over any of the human race who were not sinners. Adam is called the figure of him that was to come, and this must not be confined to one or two particulars, but must extend to every thing in which Christ’s seed are one with him, as contrasted with every thing in which Adam’s seed are one with him. If Christ’s seed are one with him in any characteristic point in which Adam’s seed

are not one with him, then the "figure," or type, would fail. Having shown the similarity, the Apostle proceeds to show the dissimilarity, or the abounding of grace over what was lost in Adam. This he continues to the end of verse 19, summing up in the 18th and 19th verses what he had referred to in the 12th, from which he was led by the considerations above specified.

In proceeding to analyze what is taught in v. 12-19, Mr Stuart professes to feel great difficulty. Considering the lamentable manner in which he has perverted and misrepresented the whole passage, this is not at all surprising. In his Synopsis, he says, 'As the consequences of Adam's sin were extended to all men, so the consequences of Christ's obedience (viz. unto death) are extended to *all*; *i. e.* Jews and Gentiles all come on an equal footing into the kingdom of Christ,' p. 196. And again he says, that verses 12-19 'are designed at once to confirm the statement made in ch. iii. 23-30, and iv. 10-19; *i. e.* to confirm the sentiment, that Gentiles as well as Jews may rejoice in the reconciliation effected by Christ; while, at the same time, the whole representation serves very much to enhance the greatness of the blessings which Christ has procured for sinners, by the *contrast* in which these

‘ blessings are placed,’ p. 198. There is here no reference at all to the distinction between Jews and Gentiles. The design is evidently to show the likeness between the way in which righteousness and life came, and the way in which condemnation and death came, the former by Christ, the latter by Adam. He adds, ‘ I cannot perceive the particular design of introducing such a contrast in this place, unless it be to show the propriety and justice of extending the blessings of reconciliation to the Gentiles as well as to the Jews, and to set off to the best advantage the greatness of these blessings.’ But the extension of these blessings to the Gentiles, however important a truth it is, and however much dwelt on in other places, has nothing to do in this place, or with this contrast. The contrast here brought forward is the same, whether the blessings are supposed to be confined to the Jews, or also extended to the Gentiles. The contrast is not between Jew and Gentile, but between Adam and Christ, between the way of condemnation and the way of justification. How does Mr Stuart bring in the distinction between Jews and Gentiles? He might as well introduce it into the history of the creation. But the common view of the passage is quite in accordance with the preceding context.

The difficulty he feels is a difficulty to reconcile it with his own unscriptural views of this part of the word of God.

The following observations of President Edwards on the connexion of this passage, in reference to the commentary of Dr Taylor, are equally applicable to the difficulties experienced respecting it by Mr Stuart. ‘ No wonder, when ‘ the Apostle is treating so full and largely of ‘ our restoration, righteousness, and life by ‘ Christ, that he is led by it to consider our fall, ‘ sin, death, and ruin by Adam; and to observe ‘ wherein these two opposite heads of mankind ‘ agree, and wherein they differ, in the manner of ‘ conveyance of opposite influences and commu- ‘ nications from each. Thus if this place be ‘ understood, as it is used to be understood by ‘ orthodox divines, the whole stands in a natu- ‘ ral, easy, and clear connexion with the prece- ‘ ding part of the chapter, and all the former ‘ part of the epistle; and in a plain agreement ‘ with the express design of all that the Apostle ‘ had been saying; and also in connexion with ‘ the words last before spoken, as introduced by ‘ the two immediately preceding verses, where ‘ he is speaking of our justification, reconcilia- ‘ tion, and salvation by Christ; which leads the ‘ Apostle directly to observe, how, on the con- ‘ trary, we have sin and death by Adam.

‘ Taking this discourse of the Apostle in its true  
 ‘ and plain sense, there is no need of great extent  
 ‘ of learning, or depth of criticism, to find out  
 ‘ the connexion; but if it be understood in Dr  
 ‘ Taylor’s sense, the plain scope and connexion  
 ‘ are wholly lost, and there was truly need of a  
 ‘ skill in criticism, and art of discerning, beyond  
 ‘ or at least different from that of former divines,  
 ‘ and a faculty of seeing something afar off,  
 ‘ which other men’s sight could not reach, in  
 ‘ order to find out the connexion,’ Orig. Sin, p.  
 312. It would be well if those, who will not  
 receive the kingdom of God as a little child,  
 would employ their “skill in criticism, and art  
 of discerning,” on some other book than the  
 Bible.

*V. 12.—Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.*

*Wherefore.*—This refers to what follows, and not to what precedes. The inference is deduced from what is still to be mentioned. For this reason, a reason that is about to be stated, namely, as by one man sin entered, so by one man came righteousness. *As.*—This is a particle introducing a comparison. The Apostle is led off from the other part of the comparison after this 12th verse, and does not find an opportunity to return to it till verse 18th, in which he

reverts to it, not directly, however, but with allusion also to what was introduced in the intermediate verses. He gives the substance of the comparison, but he repeats both parts of it, or introduces it anew, because the first introduction of it was at so great a distance. *Entered by one man.*—Mr Stuart interprets this by *commence*. Sin commenced with one man. But this is not the Apostle's meaning. If ever sin commenced, it must have commenced by one. But it is not that sin merely commenced by one, but that it came upon all the world from one. This is the only point of view in which it can be contrasted with Christ's righteousness. The meaning is, that as Adam's sin came upon all men, so Christ's righteousness came upon all his posterity, or his people whom he represented. *Death by sin.*—If death came through sin, then all who die are sinners. This proves, contrary to Mr Stuart's view of the passage, that infants are sinners in Adam. Had infants no guilt in Adam's sin, they would not meet death, or disease, or misery of any kind, till they came to be actual transgressors. *And so.*—That is consequently, or in *this manner*, not, as Mr Stuart, *in like manner*. This shows the consequence of what is said in the former clauses, namely, that death comes on all, because of the one man's offence. *Passed,* or passed through. That is, it passed through

from father to son. *All men.*—That is, all of the human race, not all merely who sin actually. And as a matter of fact, we see that death does pass upon all without exception. *For that*, or inasmuch as. Some translate this “in whom.” This is not to be approved. There is no need of this translation. The meaning is, that death passes on all, *because* all are sinners. Mr Stuart makes this refer to those who are actually sinners. But there is no warrant for this. Besides, all have not actually sinned. And this would not serve his purpose, because at all events it is here implied that death comes on men on account of sin. Since, then, infants die, it proves that they are sinners. If the assertion be, that death passes on adults because they are sinners, it may be asked why death passes upon children on the supposition that they are not sinners? And farther, where is the *likeness*, if the expression “*and so*,” be interpreted in *like manner*? Is there any likeness between sin’s entering the world through one man’s offence, and a man dying by his own actual sin? Still less would this illustrate the way of justification through Christ, which is the Apostle’s object in this place. It is quite obvious that the Apostle designs to assert that all die, because all are sinners, which as truly includes infants as adults. *Have sinned*,—that is, have really sinned, though not in their



own persons. This does not mean, as some explain it, that infants become involved in the consequences of Adam's sin, without his guilt. Adam's sin was as truly the sin of every one of his posterity as it was his own. It is only in this way that all could be involved in its consequences. Besides it is in this light only that it is illustrative of justification by Christ. Believers truly die with Christ, and pay the debt in him by being constituted one with him. It is not our business to enquire how can these things be so ; we receive it on the testimony of God.

V. 13.—(*For until the law sin was in the world : but sin is not imputed when there is no law.*)

This gives the reason why death was in the world before the law of Moses, although death *in all* is the consequence of sin. Death was reigning universally in the world before the law, as well as after it. But the Apostle had said that death was the consequence of sin ; he now states that it is no exception to this that death reigned before the law, because sin reigned before the law. *Until*—that is, from the entrance of sin and death by Adam till the law. *The law*.—This is the law of Moses. *Was*—that is, really was, or truly existed, not, as Dr Mac-knight, “ was counted,” as if Adam's posterity had his first sin counted to them, though it was not truly theirs. It was their sin as truly as it

was his, and our business is not to try to account for this on principles level to the capacity of man, but to receive it as little children, on the authority of God. Many are greatly in error in the interpretation of "sin is not imputed," understanding it as if before the giving of the law sin existed, but was not imputed; but if sin exists, it must be reckoned sin. The word means that sin does not exist where there is no law. Where there is no law there is no transgression. The conclusion, therefore, is, that as sin is not reckoned where there is no law, and as sin was reckoned, or as it existed before the law of Moses, therefore there was law before the law of Moses. The passage may be thus paraphrased:—"For sin existed among men from Adam to Moses, as well as afterwards. Yet there is no sin where there is no law. There were, then, both sin and law before the giving of the law of Moses." The law before Moses is that which God had promulgated, besides the law written in the heart, which makes all men accountable.

*V. 14.—Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come.*

*But*—that is, though it is a truth that there is no sin where there is no law, and that where there is no law transgressed, there is no death, yet we see that death reigned from Adam to

Moses, as well as from Moses to the present time. The conclusion from this is self-evident, and therefore the Apostle leaves his readers to draw it—namely, that the human race have always been under law, and have universally been transgressors. *Even over them.*—Some suppose that the persons referred to are those who did not, like Adam, break a revealed or a positive law; but this is objected to on the following grounds: 1st, There is no strong or striking difference, and therefore no contrast between the different methods of promulgating a law. Whether a law is made known by being written on the heart, or being written on tables, is nothing at all to the persons to whom it is given. A contrast might as well be made between those who know a law by reading it themselves, and those who hear it read, or those who hear it immediately from the lawgiver, and those who hear it through the medium of others. 2d, The reason of introducing the persons referred to by the word *even*, implies that they are such persons as apparently ought to be excluded from the reign of sin and death. This cannot designate those who in any way know the law. But it evidently applies to infants. No one will cordially receive this except the man who, like a little child, submits to the testimony of God. Indeed no man can understand the grounds of

this imputation, so as to be able perfectly to justify it on principles applicable to human life. It must always stand, not on our ability to see the justice of it, but on our belief that God speaks true, and that it is just, as the Judge of all the earth in all things does justly, whether we are able to see it or not. 3d, The word *even* supposes that the persons referred to are but a portion of those generally included in the declaration of the preceding clauses. These cannot be such as received not a *positive law*, for all, from Adam to Moses, are such; but it will apply to infants. Death reigned from Adam to Moses over all the human race, *even over infants* who did not actually sin, but sinned in Adam. 4th, *Who was the image or type.*—This appears to have been suggested from the immediately preceding clause, and to imply that the persons referred to were *sinner*s or transgressors of law, just as the saved are righteous—the one sinner in Adam, just as the others are righteous in Christ. The one fulfils the law just as the other breaks the law—namely, in their great head or representative. But, 5th, Even if the persons here referred to were those who did not break a positive law or a revealed law, yet it will come to the same thing. If the reign of death proves the reign of sin in such persons, must not the reign of death over infants equally

prove the reign of sin? If the death of adults before the time of Moses was a proof of their being sinners, then of necessity the death of infants must prove the same thing. If death does not prove sin in infants, it cannot prove sin in any. If infants may die though they are not sinners, then may adults die without being sinners.

*Figure of him who was to come.*—Efforts are made by some to bring uncertainty and obscurity upon a very clear subject,<sup>3</sup> making it a matter of difficulty. What are the respects in which this likeness consists? Mr Stuart instances a number of particulars, in which he makes the likeness on the part of Christ to extend to certain benefits, which his death has conferred on all mankind. But this is neither contained in this place, nor in any other passage of Scripture. This writer wishes to evade the conclusion that Adam's sin condemns all his posterity, and attempts to make out that it only indirectly led to that result. But it is evident, that from the connexion Adam must here be represented as a figure of Christ in that transgression that is spoken of, and in its consequences. His transgression, and the ruin it brought on all mankind as being one with him, was a figure of the obedience to the law, and the suffering of the penalty, and the recovery

from its condemnation, by our being one with Christ as our covenant head.

The resemblance, on account of which Adam is regarded as the type of Christ, consists in this, that Adam communicated to those whom he represented what belonged to him, and that Christ also communicated to those whom he represents what belongs to him. There is, however, a great dissimilarity between what the one and the other communicates. By his disobedience Adam has communicated sin and death, and by his obedience Christ has communicated righteousness and life; and as Adam was the author of the natural life, so Christ is the author of the spiritual life, which his people have, and which they shall enjoy at their resurrection, and according to these analogies he is called the last Adam. If, then, the actual obedience of Christ is thus imputed to all those of whom he is the head, and is counted to them for their justification as their own obedience; in the same way, the actual sin of Adam, who is the type of Christ, is imputed to all those of whom he is the head, and is counted for their condemnation, as their own sin. In writing to those at Corinth who were "sanctified in Christ Jesus," the Apostle says, "The first man is of the earth, earthy; the second man is the Lord from heaven. As is the earthy, such

are they also that are earthy ; and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly." The idea that the Scriptures give us of the sin of the first man is, that it was a complete subversion of nature, and the establishment of the kingdom of Satan in the world ; they also show us, that the purpose of sending Jesus Christ into the world was to destroy the empire of Satan, sin, and death. " We read," says Mr. Bell on the Covenants, " of two Adams, 1 Cor. xv. 45-49. As the one is called the first man, the other is called the second, even the Lord from heaven. Now, as there were innumerable multitudes of men between the first man and him, it is plain that he is called the second man for some very peculiar reason. And what else can that be, but because he is the representative and Father of all his spiritual seed, as the first man was of all his natural seed? The one is the head, the federal head of the earthy men, the other of the heavenly. Since the one is called the second man, not because he was the second in the order of creation, but because he was the second public head, it follows that the other is called the first man, not because he was first created, or in opposition to his descendants, but because he was the first public head in opposi-

tion to Christ the second. Thus the two Adams are the heads of the two covenants. The one the representative of all who are under the covenant of works, communicating his image unto them; the other the representative of all who are under the covenant of grace, and communicating his image unto them. By the one man's disobedience many were made sinners, and by the obedience of the other many shall be made righteous."

*V. 15.—But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many.*

*Not as the offence.*—There is a likeness between the sin of Adam and the gift of righteousness by Christ. But as in most instances, with regard to types, the antitype surpasses the type; and while, in some respects, the type furnishes a likeness, in others it may be very dissimilar. The sin of Adam involved all his posterity in guilt and ruin, as they were all represented in him as their head. This was a shadow of the gift of righteousness by grace. All Christ's seed were represented in him, and are made righteous by his one obedience. But while the one was a type of the other in this respect, there is a great unlikeness as to the degree of the evil and of the blessing. The evil brought death, but the bless-



ing not only recovered from ruin, but abounded to unspeakable happiness. *If through the offence of one many be dead.*—Here it is taken for granted, that “the many” who die, die through Adam’s offence. Infants then die through Adam’s offence, for they are a part of “the many.” But we have before seen that death comes only by sin; that is, none die who are not sinners, and there is no sin where there is no law, consequently infants are sinners, and must be included in the law under which Adam sinned. If infants die by Adam’s offence, they must be guilty by Adam’s offence; for God does not visit with the punishment of sin where there is no sin. *Grace of God, and gift by grace.*—These differ, as the one is the spring and fountain of the other. The gift of righteousness is a gift which results purely from grace. Some explain this phrase, as if by a figure one thing is made into two. But they are really two things. *By one, Jesus Christ.*—The gift comes only by Jesus Christ. Without his atonement for sin, the gift could not have been made. Grace could not operate till justice was satisfied.

*Hath abounded unto many.*—The abounding cannot possibly be with respect to the greater number of individuals benefited. None are benefited by Christ but those who were ruined

in Adam. And only a part of those who were ruined are benefited. In this respect, then, instead of an abounding, there is a shortcoming. The abounding is evidently in the gift extending, not only to the recovery of what Adam lost, but to blessings which Adam did not possess, and had no reason to expect. The redeemed are raised in the scale of creation above all creatures, whereas they were created lower than the angels. Some are of opinion that the Apostle here rests the *abounding* of the gift on supposition, and in the following verses proves it. Thus, as so much evil has come by Adam, it may well be supposed that much more good will come by Christ. But this is evidently mistaking the meaning altogether. The Apostle does not rest on supposition from the nature of the case, but asserts a fact. He does not say that it may well be supposed that a greater good comes by Christ than the evil that came by Adam; but he says that the good that comes by Christ does more than repair the evil that came by Adam.

V. 16.—*And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift: for the judgment was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offences unto justification.*

This is another particular in which the gift exceeds the evil. It not only, as in the last verse, gives more than Adam lost, but it pardons many sins, whereas condemnation came

by one sin on the part of Adam. *The one that sinned.*—Many read *one sin*; but the common reading is preferable. The meaning is—in the case of the *one that sinned*, namely Adam, condemnation came by *one offence*, but the free gift of righteousness extends to many offences, and to life eternal. *Judgment*, or sentence.—The original word here often itself signifies condemnation, or a condemning sentence; but as it here issues in condemnation, it must denote simply sentence, a judgment, without involving the nature of that sentence. *Condemnation.*—Here it is expressly asserted that condemnation has come by the one sin of the one man. If, then, all are condemned by that sin, all must be guilty by it, for the righteous judge would not condemn the innocent. To say that any are condemned or punished for Adam's sin who are not guilty by it, is to accuse the righteous God of injustice. *By one.*—Some make the substantive understood to be man. But though this would be a truth, yet, from the nature of the sentence, it is evident that the substantive understood is not *man*, but *sin*; for it is opposed to the *many offences*. It is, then, the one offence opposed to many offences. *Unto justification.*—The free gift confers the pardon of the many offences in such a way that the person becomes righteous; he is of course justified.

V. 17.—*For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness, shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.)*

*By one man's offence.*—Rather by *the* offence of *the* one man; the margin has “by one offence,” for which there is no foundation. *Death reigned.*—It is here said that death reigned by *the* offence of *the* one man, consequently every one over whom death reigns is involved in that one offence of that one man. It is also said “death reigned” “by the one.” The empire of death, then, extends over infants and all men, on account of the one man. Instead of dying for their actual sins, death is the penalty to all men of the first sin. *Reigned.*—Those who die are here supposed to be the subjects of death, and death is considered as their king. If infants were not guilty in Adam, they could not be under the power of death. If they are not worthy of condemnation till they sin actually, they would not die till they sin actually. *Much more.*—Here the abounding of the gift over the evil is specified. Those redeemed by the death of Christ are not merely recovered from the fall, but made to reign through Jesus Christ, which they had no title to in Adam's communion. The saved are described as receiving abundance of grace, or the abundance, that is, the grace that abounds over the loss. This applies to all

the redeemed. They all receive the abundance; they all receive more than was lost. They are also said to receive a superabounding of the gift of righteousness. This refers to the better righteousness possessed by the redeemed than that which in innocence was possessed by Adam; for theirs is the righteousness of Christ, the righteousness of him who is God. To this the righteousness of Adam and of angels cannot be compared. *Shall reign in life.*—Believers are to be kings as well as priests. All this they are to be through the one Jesus Christ; for as they were one with Adam in his fall, so they are one with Christ in what he did for them. If he be a king, they also shall be kings, for they are one with him as they were one with Adam. They shall not be re-established in the terrestrial paradise, in which man was first placed, with the danger of falling; but shall be brought to honour and glory and immortality in the heavenly world, before the throne of God, without the smallest danger of ever losing that blessing. They shall eat of the tree of life, not on earth, but in the *midst* of the *paradise of God*. Speaking of his sheep in the character of a shepherd, Jesus Christ himself says, “I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.” “I give unto them eternal life, and they shall

never perish, neither shall any one pluck them out of my hand. My Father, who gave them me, is greater than all, and no one can pluck them out of my Father's hand." "Your life is hid with Christ in God," Col. iii. 3. By all this we learn the excellence of that life in which believers shall reign, by whom it is conferred, its absolute security, and eternal duration.

V. 18.— *Therefore, as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.*

*Therefore*, or *wherefore*, then,—the one word in the original signifies *wherefore*, the other signifies *then*, or *consequently*. It states the result of what was said. *By the offence of one*, or *by one offence*.—Both of these are equally true, but the latter appears to be the design of the Apostle, as the expression wants the article. There are no words in the original corresponding to *judgment* and *free gift*, but they are rightly supplied by an ellipsis from verse 16. *Condemnation*.—Here it is expressly asserted that all men are condemned in the first offence. Infants, then, are included. If they are condemned, they cannot be innocent. *By the righteousness of one*, or rather *by one righteousness*. Mr Stuart prefers the former, because of the antithesis, *δί' ἑνὸς δικαιοῦματος*, which, he says, "naturally cannot mean any thing but the *righteousness of one*

(not *one righteousness*).” But the phrase alluded to can very naturally and properly signify one righteousness, as the obedience of Christ is summed up in his act of obedience to death. Righteousness here, Mr Stuart makes obedience, holiness, righteousness. But it is righteousness in its proper sense. By the one act, of giving himself for our sins, Christ brought in everlasting righteousness. *The free gift came upon all men.*—How did the free gift come upon all men, seeing all are not saved? Mr Stuart explains it, as signifying that righteousness is provided for all. But this is not the Apostle’s statement. The coming of the free gift upon all is contrasted with the coming of condemnation on all, and therefore it cannot mean that condemnation actually came upon all, but that the free gift was only provided for all. Besides, it is added, *unto justification of life.*—This is the issue of the coming of the free gift. It ends in the justification of life. *Upon all men.*—Those here referred to must be those, and those only, who are partakers of justification, and who shall finally be saved. What then? Are all men to be justified? No; but the all men, here said to be justified, are evidently the all that are represented by Christ. All who have been one with Adam were involved in his condemnation; and all who are one with Christ shall be justified.

There is a reference to the two heads, and *the all men* must be limited to their respective heads.

*V. 19.*—*For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.*

*For.*—This assigns a reason for what the Apostle has said. *By one man's disobedience many were made sinners.*—Here it is expressly asserted that *the many* (not many; it includes all who were in Adam, that is, all the human race) were made or constituted sinners by Adam's disobedience. Mr Stuart attempts to evade this, by supposing that they are led into sin by the occasion of Adam's sin. But this is a great perversion. Adam's disobedience is said not merely to be the occasion of leading his posterity into sin, but to have constituted them sinners. Mr Stuart rests much on the absurdity of supposing that one man is punished for another's offence. But Adam's offence is the offence of all his posterity. It constituted them sinners, and therefore must be their sin. We must, like little children, receive God's testimony upon this as well as every other subject. We must not rest our acquiescence in God's testimony upon our ability to fathom the depth of his unsearchable counsels. Mr Stuart makes Adam's sin merely what he calls the instrumental or occasional cause. But with no propriety can Adam's sin be called the instrument by which his posterity sinned. This



is pure nonsense. And an occasional cause is no cause. Every person knows the difference between a *cause* and an *occasion*. Besides, to suppose that Christ's own obedience is the real cause of our justification, and that Adam's sin is only the *occasion*, not properly the cause of our condemnation, is to destroy the contrast between Adam and Christ, on which the Apostle here insists. If Christ's obedience is the ground of our justification, Adam's disobedience must, by the contrast, be the ground of our condemnation. *So*.—That is, *in this way*, not in *like manner*. It is not in a manner that has merely some likeness, but it is in the very same manner. For although there is a contrast in the things, the one being disobedience, and the other obedience, yet there is a perfect *identity* in the manner. This is important, as by the turn given to the word translated *so*, Mr Stuart perverts the passage. *The many* shall be constituted righteous. The many here applies to all in Christ. It is argued, that the phrase "the many" must be equally extensive in its application in both cases. So it is as to the respective representatives. *The many*, with reference to Adam, includes all his race. *The many*, with respect to Christ, implies all his seed. Again, if it is said that Adam's posterity became sinners merely by the example, influence, or occasion of his sin, it may, with

equal propriety, he said that Christ's posterity became righteous by the example or occasion of his righteousness. This makes void the gospel altogether.

Mr Stuart seems to understand that, according to the doctrine of imputation, sins are accounted to Adam's race that are not their sins, or, in other words, that God accounts a thing to be fact which is not fact; just as he had before affirmed, that faith is imputed *as* righteousness. But Adam's sin is imputed to his posterity, because it is their sin in reality, though we may not be able to see the way in which it is so. Indeed we should not pretend to explain this, because it is to be believed on the foundation of the divine testimony, and not on human speculation, or on our ability to account for it. 1. If God testifies that Adam's first sin is also that of all his posterity, is he not to be credited? If there be no such divine testimony, we do not plead for the doctrine. On this ground the doctrine must rest. 2. Mr Stuart speaks of imputation in its strict sense, or in a rigid sense. This too much resembles an artifice designed to deceive the simple into the belief that he admits the doctrine, if not substantially, at least in some sense. This, however, is not the fact. He cannot admit imputation in any sense. He does not admit Adam's sin to be our

sin in the lowest degree. 3. If in reality he does admit imputation in the lowest degree, then it is not impossible in the highest. If it is essentially unjust, it cannot exist in the lowest degree. Why then does he speak in this uncandid manner? Does this language betoken a man writing under the full conviction that he is contending for the truth of God? He professes to determine this question by an appeal to the natural sentiments of men. But if this tribunal is sufficient to decide this point, is it not equally so with respect to innumerable others, in which deists and heretics have made a like appeal? On this ground may not a man say, I cannot admit the eternity of future punishment, for it is contrary to my natural sentiments: I cannot admit that a good Being is the creator of the world, for he would not have permitted evil to enter it had he been able to keep it out? He says, page 233, "We never did, and never can, feel guilty of another's act, which was done without any knowledge or concurrence of our own." But if God has testified that there is a sense in which that act is our own, shall we not be able to admit and feel this? It altogether depends on the Divine testimony. Now such is the testimony of this verse in its obvious sense. How this is, or in what sense this is the case, we may not be able to comprehend. This is no

part of our business. This is no part of the Divine testimony. We are to believe God on his word, not from our capacity to understand the manner in which the thing testified is true. Mr Stuart himself asserts, page 235, that the sufferings of infants may conduce to their eternal good, yet, he says, "In what way I pretend not to determine." And are we to determine in what way Adam's sin is ours, before we admit the fact on the Divine testimony? He says, page 233, "We may just as well say, that we can appropriate to ourselves and make our own the righteousness of another, as his unrighteousness." Here he denies the imputation of the righteousness of Christ. If the Divine testimony assures us, that by a Divine constitution we are made one with Christ, is not his righteousness ours? In opposition to all such infidel reasonings, it is becoming in the believer to say, I fully acknowledge, and I humbly confess, on the testimony of my God, that I am guilty of Adam's sin; but by the same testimony, and by the same Divine constitution, I believe that I am a partaker of God's righteousness—the righteousness of my God and Saviour Jesus Christ, of the free gift of that righteousness, which not only removes the guilt, and all the fatal consequences of that first sin, but of the many offences which I have myself committed. Regarding

the difficulties that in both these respects present themselves, I hear my Saviour say, "What is that to thee? follow thou me." In the mean time, it is sufficient for me to know, that the Judge of all the earth will do right: What I know not now, I shall know hereafter.

A considerable part of the resistance to the imputation of Adam's sin, is owing to the ground on which the evidence of the fact is often rested. It is not simply placed on the authority of the testimony of God, but is attempted to be justified by human procedure. The difficulty that some persons feel on this subject, arises from the supposition, that though the sin of the first man is charged upon his posterity, yet it is not theirs. But the Scriptures hold it forth as ours in as true a sense as it was Adam's. We may be asked to explain how it can be ours, and here we may find ourselves at a loss for an answer. But we ought to consider that we are not obliged to give an answer on this point either to others or to ourselves. We are to receive it on the Divine testimony, assured that what God declares must be true, however unable we may be to comprehend it. We ought not to perplex ourselves by endeavouring to ascertain the grounds of the Divine testimony on this subject. Our business is to understand the import of what is testified, and to receive it on that authority—not to inquire

into the justice of the constitution from which our guilt results. This is not revealed, and it is utterly beyond our province and beyond our depth. Did Abraham understand why he was commanded to offer up his son? No. But he was strong in faith, and his faith in obeying in that instance is held forth in Scripture for our imitation, Heb. xi. 17. Like Abraham, let us give glory to God, by believing implicitly what we have no means of knowing to be true, but simply on the testimony of God.

The defenders of scriptural truth take wrong ground when they rest it on any thing but the testimony of Scripture. It is highly dishonourable to God to refuse to submit to his decisions till we can demonstrate their justice. Those writers who have endeavoured to vindicate the Divine justice in accounting Adam's sin to be ours, and to reconcile the mind of man to that procedure, have not only laboured in vain, but have actually injured the cause which they meant to uphold. The connexion according to which we suffer with our first father, is not such as is to be vindicated or illustrated by human transactions. The union of Adam and his posterity is a Divine constitution. The grounds of this constitution are not to be found in any of the justifiable transactions of men; and all attempts to make us submit by convincing us of its pro-

priety, from what we are able to understand upon a comparison with the affairs of men, are only calculated to impose on credulity and to produce unbelief. We receive it because God says it, not because we see it to be just. We know it to be just, because it is part of the ways of the just God. But how it is just we may not be able to see. We receive it like little children who believe the testimony of their father, though they do not understand the grounds or reasons of the thing testified.

Nothing is more common than to vindicate the equity of our implication in the ruin of Adam's fall, by alleging that had he stood, we should have been partakers in all his blessings. Had he stood, it is said, you would have received the benefit of his standing; is it not therefore just that you should also receive the loss of his failure? Here the matter is rested, not on God's testimony, but on our sense of justice in the affairs of men. We reply immediately, that if the transaction is not entered into with our consent, we have no obligation to be punished with the loss. Adam's sin then we acknowledge to be ours, not because a similar thing would be just among men, but because God, the just God, testifies that it is so; and we know that the righteous God will do righteously. To submit

in this way is rational; to submit on the ground of understanding the justice of the thing is to pretend to understand what is incomprehensible, and to rest faith on a fallacy, namely, that the ground of the imputation of Adam's sin is of the same nature with human transactions. The method of vindicating Divine truth here censured has also the most unhappy tendency in encouraging Christians to think that they must always be able to give a reason for their believing God's testimony, from their ability to comprehend the thing testified. It accustoms them to think that they should believe God not simply on his testimony, but on seeing with their own eyes that the thing is true independently of his testimony. On the contrary, the Christian ought to be accustomed to submit to God's testimony without question, and without reluctance, even in things the furthest beyond the reach of the human mind. "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth," ought to be the motto of every Christian.

The true ground on which to vindicate it is the explicit testimony of God in the Scripture. This is so clear that no man can set it aside, we need not say without wresting the Scriptures, but, we may assert, without being conscious of violence of interpretation. Our defence of this



doctrine then should ever be, "Thus saith the Lord." This method of defence, which we are taught in this same epistle, chap. ix. 20, is not merely the only scriptural one, but it is the one that will have the greatest success. As long as a reason is alleged by the wisdom of man in support of the doctrine, so long, from the same source, an argument will be produced on the other side. But when the word of God is appealed to, and upon it all the stress of evidence rested, the Christian must submit. The writer knows from personal experience the effect of this method of teaching this doctrine.

"You cannot comprehend," says Luther, "how a just God can condemn those who are born in sin, and cannot help themselves, but must, by a necessity of their natural constitution, continue in sin, and remain children of wrath. The answer is, God is incomprehensible throughout; and therefore his justice as well as his other attributes must be incomprehensible. It is on this very ground that St Paul exclaims, 'O the depth of the riches and the knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! Now his judgments would not be past finding out, if we could always perceive them to be just.'"

V. 20.—*Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.*

*The law entered*, “privily entered,” says Dr Macknight, referring to the law of nature, which, he says, privily entered after the fall of our first parents. But no new law entered after the fall. What is called the law of nature, is only the remains of the law written in creation on the heart of man. The law here is evidently the law of Moses, and the original word signifies that the law entered *in addition* to the law which Adam transgressed, and to the law written in the heart. This is the effect of *παρα* in this place. *That the offence might abound.*—Some translate this, “so as the offence eventually abounds.” This is not the Apostle’s meaning. They say that the intention of the law was not to make sin abound, but to restrain sin, and make fewer sins. If this was the intention of giving the law, the lawgiver has been disappointed, for sins have been multiplied a thousandfold by the entrance of the law. This their view of the matter admits; for they acknowledge that this was the *event*, though not the *intention*. But if this was the event, it must also have been the intention of the lawgiver, though not of the law. God cannot be disappointed of his intentions.

But it is self-evidently clear that the intention of the promulgation of the law of Moses could not be to lessen the number of sins, when almost the whole ceremonial part of it makes things to be sin, which were not sin before the giving of the law, and which are not sinful in their own nature. Besides, sin is greatly increased as to the guilt of the breach of the moral law, by the promulgation of the law of Moses. While the law of God is holy, just, and good, it was evidently God's intention, in the giving of it, that offences might abound. In this way the wickedness of the human heart was manifested. It showed men that they were sinners. Had not the law been repeated in its extent and purity at Sinai, such was the darkness in men's minds, that they would not have thought themselves transgressors of its precept, or obnoxious to its curse; and not seeing themselves sinners, they would not have seen the necessity of a Surety. The "commandment is a lamp, and the law is light;" Prov. vi. 23. It discovers the real state of human nature, and manifests not only the evil and aggravation, but also the vast accumulation and extent of the wickedness of man. The entrance, then, of the law between the author of condemnation and the author of justification, in order that sin might abound, was of the highest importance. "By the law is the knowledge

of sin." The law did not put sin into the heart, but it was an instrument to display the depravity that was already in the heart. But vain man will be wise, and he will compel the word of God to submit to his own views. It may be justly said, that such displays of the deep things of God as are made in his word are intended to manifest the blindness of the human mind, and the deep depravity of human nature. *Where sin abounded grace did much more abound.* Grace abounds over sin, inasmuch as not only it pardons the most numerous and the most heinous sins, but also confers eternal life upon the sinner.

V. 21.—*That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.*

*As sin hath reigned unto* (literally in or by) *death.*—Death here, and throughout this chapter, as well as in many other places, signifies not temporal death merely, but the whole punishment of sin, of which temporal death is perhaps the smallest part. Eternal misery is included in it, but the word "death" does not literally denote eternal misery. This is called the "*second death*," and this expression gives us the key to understand the full extent of the meaning of the word. The punishment of hell is the *second death*, according to Scripture explanation, Rev. xx. 14; xxi. 8, and therefore it is

no fancy to understand future eternal punishment as included in the word. But though the expression includes this, it is not from the literal meaning of the word death that it proves it. As death is the greatest of all temporal evils, it was not only a part of the punishment of the first sin, but it was the symbol of the second death. Another proof that death includes the whole punishment of sin is, that in Rom. vi. 23, death is called the wages of sin. If death be the wages of sin, then death must include every thing that is the wages or punishment of sin. But the Scriptures point out future misery, as well as temporal death, as being the wages of sin. This proof is incontrovertible. The Scriptures show, that the punishment of sin is eternal misery; if so, death includes eternal misery. While this lays no stress on the necessary literal meaning of the word death, it comes to the same conclusion. Another proof that death here signifies the whole punishment of sin, and, consequently, that it includes eternal misery, is, that the gift of God is said to be "eternal life." Now life literally is as limited as death. Yet life here signifies not merely existence in a state of consciousness, but of *happiness*. Life, indeed, even without the word eternal, is in Scripture taken to signify all the happiness of the future state of the blessed.

What objection, then, can there be to a like extended signification of the term death? That it includes spiritual death is beyond a question, as the Scriptures expressly use this term in this sense, Eph. ii. 1; Col. ii. 13. That they are all included in the threatening against the eating of the tree in the garden is most certain. It is no objection that it was not explained to Adam in this sense. If any part of Scripture explains it in this sense it is sufficient. It may be said, that it would be unjust to punish Adam in any extent that he did not understand in the threatening. He understood by it destruction, at least we have no ground to say that he did not. Returning to the dust is not the explanation of the threatening, it being God's appointment in connexion with the promise of Christ. But it is perfectly sufficient that he knew the law that was given him. To make him guilty there was no necessity for any threatening. Is not a child guilty when he breaks the command of a father, even though the command was unaccompanied with threatening? With regard to Christ's suffering for us, it was not necessary that he should suffer eternally. It answers all the ends of justice if he has suffered a perfect equivalent. That he has done so we have the clear testimony of the Scriptures, and we have no need to show how he has done so by meta-

physical explanations and calculations of our own.

*Even so might grace reign through righteousness.*—Mr Stuart having subverted, by his interpretations and reasonings, every idea of the imputation of sin, as he had formerly altogether set aside the imputation of righteousness, is only consistent in misrepresenting the meaning of this passage. As he has mistaken the import of the expression *righteousness* at the commencement of this discussion, so he also misunderstands it here. His explanation is, that ‘grace ‘might reign or have an influence widely extended, in the bestowment of justification or ‘pardoning mercy.’ The passage informs us, that grace reigns unto eternal life, which does indeed include the bestowment of justification. But it informs us of something more, and that of the last importance, which Mr Stuart’s mistaking righteousness for justification leads him entirely to omit. Grace reigns *through righteousness, even the righteousness of God, which fulfils his law, and satisfies his justice, and displays his holiness*; whereas, did grace bestow a justification in such a way as Mr Stuart describes, it would do so at the expense of law and justice, and dishonour the whole Divine administration.

*Unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.*—

This is that life of which Jesus Christ, who is risen from the dead, is the author, as the death here spoken of is that which he came to destroy. The source of our natural life is Adam, but he is dead, and in his communion we all die. But a new source of life is provided in the second Adam, that he may deliver from death all that are in his communion. "The first Adam was made a living soul," that he might communicate natural life to those who had not received it. "The last Adam was made a quickening spirit," that he might impart spiritual life to those who had lost it. The first communicated an earthly and perishable life, the second a life that is celestial and immortal. Jesus Christ is that eternal life which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us; and the Father hath given him power over all flesh, to give eternal life to as many as he hath given him. "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me, and I give unto them eternal life." The termination, then, of the reign of death over those whom he represents, and the establishment of the reign of grace through the everlasting righteousness which he has brought in, are all by Jesus Christ. He hath abolished death. By him came grace and truth; he brought life and immortality to light. He is the true God and eternal life. And "to this end Christ both



died and rose, and revived, that he might be the Lord both of the dead and the living." The similarity of the Apostle's commencement in unfolding the doctrine of justification, and of his conclusion, is very striking. He begins by declaring that the *Gospel of Christ* is the power of God *unto salvation*, because therein is the *righteousness* of God revealed; and he ends by affirming, that *grace* reigns through *righteousness* unto *eternal life* by *Jesus Christ* our Lord.

In this 21st verse the doctrine of the whole preceding context, the salvation of believers, is summed up in a manner most beautiful and striking. Having exhibited in a strong light the righteousness of God, chap. iii. 21, 22, the Apostle returns to it in this chapter; and having contrasted Christ and Adam, he brings out his conclusion in this verse with a contrast of the reign of sin and grace. Sin had an absolute sway over all the descendants of Adam. There was nothing good among them, or in any of them. Sin existed in every human soul. Therefore it is said to *reign*. The absolute and universal influence of sin is figured by the empire of a monarch in uncontrolled sovereignty. Grace also *reigns*. There was nothing in men to merit salvation, or to recommend them in any measure to God. Grace, therefore, *reigns* in their salvation, which is wholly and entirely

of free favour. Sin is said to reign *in*, or *by* death. This shows that death was, in every human being, the effect of his sin. The way in which death manifested its universal reign over the human race, was in causing their death. This most fully proves that infants are sinners. If sin ruled in causing death to its subjects, then all who die are the subjects of sin. Death to the human race is in every instance the effect of the dominion of sin. *Sin reigns in death.*—But, if sin has reigned, grace reigns; if the former reigns in death, the latter reigns in life; yea, it reigns *unto* eternal life. How then does it reign unto life? Is it by a gratuitous pardon? Doubtless it is. But it is not by forgiving the sinner in an arbitrary way, with respect to the punishment due to sin. Forgiveness is indeed entirely gratuitous, but if it cost believers nothing, it has cost much to their Surety. *Grace reigns through righteousness.*—How beautifully is thus fulfilled the prophetic declaration of Psalm lxxxv. 10–13. Grace did not, could not, deliver the lawful captives without paying the ransom. It did not trample on justice, or evade its demands. It reigns by providing a Saviour to suffer in the room of the guilty. By the death of Jesus Christ, full compensation was made to the law and justice of God.

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The Apostle in the end of this chapter brings his argument to a close. Every individual of the human race is proved to be guilty before God, and on the ground of his own righteousness no man can be saved. The state of the Gentile world is exhibited in the most degrading view, while history and experience most fully concur in the condemnation. Man is represented as vile, below the condition of the brutes, and the facts on which the charge is grounded, were so notorious, that they could not be denied. Nor had the most uncultivated Pagans any apology for their conduct. Their sins were against nature, and their ignorance of God was in spite of the revelation of his character in the works of creation. They are condemned by the standard they themselves recognise, and their own mutual recriminations and defences prove that they are fully aware of sin and responsibility.

But are not the Jews excepted from this black catalogue of crimes? Are they not righteous through that holy, just, and good law which they received from the God of Israel? By no means. By the testimony of that revelation which they received, all men are guilty, and this testimony directly implies those to whom the revelation was given. With this experience also coincides.

The Apostle charges them as actually doing the same thing which they condemned in the heathens. Both, then, are guilty, and from their superior light the Jews must be the most guilty.

Nor was it ever in contemplation of the law of Moses to give the Jews a righteousness by their own obedience. The law was designed rather to manifest their guilt. By the law there was to no individual a righteousness unto life; by the law was the "knowledge of sin." All men, then, without exception, are shut up unto condemnation.

But this law veiled the truth, which the Apostle now unfolds, and exhibits in the strongest light. He proclaims a righteousness so perfect, as to answer all the demands of the law, both as to penalty and obedience—a righteousness so free as to extend to the very chief of sinners. This righteousness is in Jesus Christ. He has borne the curse of the law, and perfectly obeyed all its precepts. All this merit becomes ours by believing the testimony of the Father concerning his Son. The guiltiest either of the Jews or the Gentiles becomes perfectly righteous the moment he believes in the work of Christ. This glorious plan of salvation vindicates the law, exalts the character of God, and reconciles mercy with justice. In

the gospel grace appears; in the gospel grace reigns; but it reigns not on the ruins of law and justice, but in the more glorious establishment of both; it reigns through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord. In the salvation of men by the Son of God, the law is not made void. It is magnified and made honourable. In this salvation sin is not represented as a harmless thing. It is here seen in a more awful light than in the future punishment of the wicked. The gospel is the only manifestation of God in the full glory of his character as the just God, yet the Saviour—punishing sin to the utmost extent of its demerit, at the same time that his mercy reaches to the most guilty of the children of men.



## APPENDIX.

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IN the preceding Exposition several references have been made to Professor Stuart's Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, with a view to counteract the danger arising from the circulation of that work in this country. The baneful effects of his system, there is reason to fear, will be very extensive. Is it strange that speculations which teach men to deny, or receive with hesitation, or modify with fanciful limitations, the doctrine of their connexion with the first man in his sin, should lead to every error that pleases the carnal mind? Wrong views of Divine truth among the people of God are always the immediate forerunners of a total departure from the gospel on the part of the great body of the professors of religion.

In the preface to his Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews, Professor Stuart advertises his readers that they are not to expect from him a sermonizing commentary; and that his design does not coincide with that of several English commentators, to whose practical works he refers with approbation. But this is not the only difference between him and the generality of the writers mentioned. He does not hold the same doctrines with them. He has not only a different object, but he has a widely different system. It may further be remarked, that many of these "sermonizing commentaries" have exhibited the meaning of the inspired language with greater correctness than he has done by his criticisms. There is no complaint with respect to the propriety of his confining himself to the work of a critic and translator; the complaint

is, that by false criticism he has misrepresented the Divine testimony in some of the most momentous points in the scheme of Christianity.

Mr. Stuart's explanations of the contents of the five first chapters of the Epistle to the Romans are calculated not to enlighten but to perplex and mislead his readers, and overthrow their faith. He commences, in the first chapter, by denying that Jesus Christ was declared to be the Son of God by his resurrection from the dead, in support of which he asks if the resurrection of Lazarus and others was a proof that they were the sons of God. After this what can be expected? The words cited from the prophet, contained in the 17th verse, are, according to him, an example of quotation by *accommodation*. This is highly derogatory to the word of God, and proves that he is unacquainted with the doctrine of the inspiration of the Scriptures. The meaning of the leading expression, the righteousness of God, in the same verse, which lies at the foundation of the whole of the Apostle's reasonings, he has altogether misapprehended.

In expounding the second chapter, he errs at its commencement, asserting that the Apostle does not directly address the Jews; but that, although he has them "constantly in mind, he still advances only general propositions, applicable in common to them and to others;" the meaning and force of the reasoning, in the first part of that chapter, are thus misconceived and made void. The propositions in the five first verses are not general; neither are they applicable to others, but exclusively to the Jews, to whom they are *directly* addressed. In the third chapter, he removes the foundation of the Apostle's proof, taken from the Old Testament Scriptures, that all men are under sin, by denying that the passages quoted have 'a *direct* bearing on the *universal* depravity of the human race.' And after again misrepresenting the signification of the leading term in the epistle to which the Apostle there recurs, he entirely sets aside the meaning of the last verse of that chapter, which contains the important affirmation, that the justification of sinners by faith without works, so far from making void the law, establishes it. This assertion, indeed, must, according to Mr. Stuart's account of justification, be explicitly contradict-



ed, for the view he gives of it does make void the Law. The great doctrine of the imputation of Christ's righteousness, as illustrated in the fourth chapter, and that of the imputation of Adam's sin, as exhibited in the fifth, are entirely perverted by Mr. Stuart. The above are not mistakes respecting the signification of particular expressions, but respecting great leading points in these five chapters.

Mr. Stuart has totally subverted the doctrine of justification. According to him a man is not justified by the imputation of the righteousness of Christ, which, in contradiction to the Apostle, who affirms that it is imputed, he holds to be *impossible*. Instead of this, he maintains that faith is "*counted as complete obedience*," p. 177. And this statement, so derogatory to the character of God, is made, in order to shew that justification is gratuitous. Justification is, indeed, gratuitous, but not in this manner of man's devising, according to which God would regard a fiction as a reality, counting to a man as complete obedience that which in no respect whatever answers the demands of his law. Mr. Stuart may speak of gratuitous justification; but let no one be misled by this. Such language may be used, while the gospel of the true grace of God is rejected.

After declaring that faith is counted as "*complete obedience*," Mr. Stuart himself appears not quite satisfied with this statement. Accordingly, he afterwards asks, p. 506: 'But where has Paul taught, that a man is justified by faith *alone*; and that evangelical good works are not an essential condition of his justification before God?' From this it appears that complete obedience *ALONE* will not do. Evangelical good works must come in to complete what was before complete! And shall Christians give up the doctrine of the Apostles to give place to such absurdities? Lest, however, any one should mistake his meaning, Mr. Stuart hastens to add, '*good works*, in the gospel sense of these words, are an essential condition of our acceptance with God:' Is this assertion less heretical than the doctrine promulgated by the false teachers who troubled the churches of Galatia—those teachers whom Paul wished to be cut off, and of whom he affirmed that they should bear their own judgment? It is a perversion of the gospel of

Christ. It is another gospel, as that of which Paul declared, that if an angel from heaven preached it, he should be accursed; and that, if any man received it, Christ should profit him nothing.

If, however, Mr. Stuart, in this manner, contradicts the whole testimony of Scripture respecting the doctrine of justification and acceptance with God, in doing so he does not stand alone. Whether or not he has borrowed it from them, his system here is precisely that of Arminius and Socinus. In proof of this assertion I give the following extracts from Witsius, on the economy of the Covenants, from the chapter on justification, where he is animadverting on the sentiments of some learned man whom he does not name. After asserting that the ‘thing for which we are justified, and which some ‘call the *matter* of our justification, is the perfect righteousness of Christ alone,’ and after supporting this position by suitable quotations from Scripture, Witsius observes; ‘*Arminius*, by his subtlety, frames vain empty quibbles, when he ‘contends that the righteousness of Christ cannot be imputed ‘to us for righteousness, because it is his very righteousness; ‘laying this down as a foundation, that which is imputed to ‘us for righteousness is not properly our righteousness. ‘Which none will admit, who has considered that every judgment of God is according to truth: whence it follows, that ‘nothing can be imputed to any one for righteousness which is ‘not ‘really righteousness.’ And again, ‘It is well known ‘that the reformed churches condemned Arminius and his followers, for saying that faith comes to be considered in the ‘matter of justification as a work or act of ours; whereas the ‘Dutch confession speaks far more accurately; namely, that ‘faith is here instead of an instrument; whereby we are joined together with Christ in a partnership or communion of ‘all his benefits.’ We thus learn the perfect coincidence of the views of Professor Stuart with those of *Arminius*, both as to the denial of the imputation of Christ’s righteousness, and respecting the office of faith in justification, only Arminius does not, according to these quotations at least, assert with Mr. Stuart, that the imputation of Christ’s righteousness is *impossible*, nor propound the monstrous absurdity, that faith is

“*counted as complete obedience.*” Let us now turn to Socinus.

‘Some time ago,’ says Witsius, ‘I read in Socinus, before the sentiments of this celebrated person came to hand, the same exception which he makes, that by the works which Paul excludes from justification is understood the perfect observance of the law, such as the legal Covenant requires. For thus, he says, *de Servat*, p. iv. c. ii., “The works to which faith is opposed are not every kind of works, nor taken and considered in every light, but, as we have observed elsewhere, these works denote an absolute and perpetual observance and performance of the Divine law, through the whole course of life.” But our divines openly declared against this exposition; who contend that all works, however considered, are opposed to faith.’ And again, ‘But we are farther to enquire, how faith justifies. Not certainly in that sense, as if God graciously accepts the act of faith, and new gospel obedience flowing therefrom in the room of the perfect obedience, which, from the rigour of the law, we are bound to perform in order to justification: as the *Socinians*, and Curcellæus, who imitates them in this respect, explain it; understanding by the faith *the observance of the precepts of the gospel*, which God has prescribed by Christ. For this is to make void the whole gospel. The gospel has not substituted our faith, but Christ’s obedience, by which the righteousness of the law is fulfilled, in the room of that perfect obedience, which the law required in order to justification.’ Witsius afterwards adds, that the *Socinians* and Remonstrants say, ‘that in the room of perfect obedience, which the law prescribed as the condition of justification, the Gospel now requireth faith, as the condition of the same justification.’ Such is the complete agreement of Professor Stuart, on points of the most essential importance, with the worst of the heretics who have perverted the truth as it is in Jesus.

‘The doctrine of justification,’ says Witsius, ‘diffuseth itself through the whole body of divinity, and if the foundation here is well laid, the whole building will be the more solid and grand; whereas a bad foundation or superstructure threatens a dreadful ruin.’

The doctrine of the imputation of the sin of the first man, Mr. Stuart positively rejects. In the exposition of the fifth chapter, I have called the attention of the reader to the manner in which he has there wrested the testimony of the Apostle, especially in the nineteenth verse. "*For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners; so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.*" And is there here any darkness? Is there any one not able to discern the meaning of the Apostle? Could it be said more expressly that we were made sinners by Adam, and that we are in the same sense made righteous by Christ? What phrase, what word in this sentence is ambiguous? Yet, in the face of this explicit testimony of the word of God, Mr. Stuart asserts, 'We may just as well say, that we can appropriate to ourselves, and make our own, the righteousness of another, as his unrighteousness.' He lays it down as an axiom, that the imputation of sin or righteousness is impossible. 'A transfer,' he says, 'of moral turpitude is just as impossible as a transference of souls,' and by criticism the most violent he perverts the clear and strong language of inspiration. Is it not then palpably evident that this criticism has been made to subserve his opinion: and that this opinion is not the result of his criticism? He disowns all regard to human systems; but there is an authority as deceitful and dangerous as any other from which he cannot boast exemption. This is a regard, in explaining Scripture, to the prepossessions of the human mind. To these he has evidently listened. If he looks on it as a self-evident truth that certain doctrines are false, is this conviction less likely to influence his interpretation of the words of the Apostle that express the contrary, than names and systems to act upon the minds of others?

If we cannot be one with Adam, neither can we be one with Christ; and if the imputation of Adam's sin be impossible, so likewise is the imputation of Christ's righteousness. But this does not startle Mr. Stuart. He scruples not to deny the imputation of Christ's righteousness as well as the imputation of Adam's sin. Surely Christians should pause before they listen to these destructive heresies. Since the Scriptures explicitly attest that we are guilty in Adam's sin, is it not awful hardihood

to wrest on this point the Divine testimony ; and if we cannot be saved but by the imputation of the righteousness of Christ, what shall we say of him who declares it to be impossible to have either sin or righteousness transferred ?

If a right view be taken of the fifth chapter, from the 12th to the 19th verse, all is consistent and easy to the Christian. If the obvious testimony of the Spirit be rejected in order to suit human theories, or indulge the pride of the carnal heart ; no scheme will ever reconcile its various parts. Mr. Stuart finds many difficulties, which it costs him a great deal of trouble to remove. He is ever fighting with the Scriptures and contradicting himself. From first to last he is explaining, and defining, and guarding, and straining ; but all his ingenuity has not enabled him to give a scheme that will either be self-consistent, or consistent with the language of inspiration.

In the American "Biblical Repertory," in which Professor Stuart's Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans is reviewed, and a multitude of his errors pointed out, the reviewer, although very inconsistently he begins with speaking in his praise, observes, 'It is in these discussions,' (viz. theological discussions) 'the writer has most signally failed ; misapprehended the subject in debate ; misconceived the meaning of the authors whom he quotes ; contradicted himself ; done violence to his own theoretical rules of interpretation, and gratuitously denounced doctrines, which have not only always been regarded as part of the common faith of Protestant Christendom, but which he himself over and over either asserts or implies.' - And again in the same review it is said, 'We think that no man can fail to observe that Professor Stuart's rejection of certain doctrines, is the result of a mere prejudice awakened in his mind, and strengthened into an antipathy. That he was never led to it by the process of interpretation is clear, in the first place, from the evident labour which it has cost him to force even his own mind to accede to his interpretations ; and in the second, that he admits propositions which involve every one of the offensive principles involved in the doctrines which he rejects. Here then is precisely the point where Professor Stuart is most deceived. Just when he thinks himself most independent

‘ because he differs from his former self and his present friends, ‘ he is most obviously led by other writers, and his own preju- ‘ dices.’ Such is the view given in America of Mr. Stuart’s interpretations, in a commentary which has been strongly re- commended to Christians in this country.

Since the publication of that commentary, Mr. Stuart has inserted a paper in the American Biblical Repository of July 1836, in which his system, so directly opposed to the Word of God, is still more fully developed. He there explicitly denies that, in the execution of the plan of salvation, the claims of justice are maintained. ‘ The law,’ he says, ‘ enjoins fully ‘ and simply our own *personal* obedience, and pronounces a ‘ curse on us solely, when we disobey it. But in every go- ‘ vernment, in heaven and on earth, there is reserved to the ‘ supreme power which made the law, a right of *dispensing* ‘ with its demands, when the general good admits of such a ‘ dispensation.’ ‘ Of what real use, then,’ he adds, ‘ can it be, ‘ to retain a mere fiction of law in the process of our final ‘ justification and acceptance? Salvation by *pure grace*, is sal- ‘ vation purely gratuitous and of mere mercy, and not at all ‘ on any *legal* ground. The very fact of its bestowment, is a ‘ superseding of the claims of law, and acting on grounds of a ‘ different nature.’ Here is an open avowal of that part of the Socinian heresy which denies that justice is an essential attribute of God, since its exercise may be suspended. Thus Mr. Stuart misrepresents the character of God, and makes void the law. He overturns the gospel, the glory of which is, that grace reigns through righteousness, while he sets aside the necessity of the sacrifice for sin. If God can consistently with his character remit the claims of law and justice, to what purpose, beyond what Socinians admit, were the incarnation and death of Christ? According to Mr. Stuart, the imputation of his righteousness is ‘ a mere fiction of law in the process of ‘ our final justification and acceptance.’ Could an Arian or an infidel show greater opposition to the gospel than Mr. Stuart? All this explains the reason why Mr. Stuart so often substitutes the word justification for righteousness, in his translation and Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans.

Let those who know the truth, as it is in Jesus, consider

what they have been doing in recommending Mr. Stuart's work. He has been extolled as an *able Biblical critic*. In Mr. Carson's work, entitled "Examination of the principles of Biblical interpretation of Ernesti, Ammon, Stuart, and other philologists," it may be seen how unfounded are Mr. Stuart's pretensions to such a character. Mr. Carson intends, in another publication, to go forward with the consideration of Mr. Stuart's defects as a critic, and also to develop the false principles of criticism on which Mr. Tholuck, like Mr. Stuart, has proceeded in his Exposition of the Epistle to the Romans. Let the reader observe the manner in which Mr. Stuart has misrepresented the type of Melchisedec, as pointed out in Mr. Carson's very able work, p. 249, &c. Of the German writers, whose books he criticises, Mr. Carson asks—"What is it that entitles those men to the exalted seat to which common opinion has raised them? They are learned men, I admit; but they are not critics; they are universally acquainted with books, but not with the philosophy of language. Their interpretation is as destitute of science, as their theology is of truth." P. 129. If the Word of God be true, if Paul was really an ambassador of Christ, Mr. Stuart has grossly corrupted the gospel. How deplorable must be the state of those churches, that, after he has promulgated such doctrines in an elaborate work, retain him as an instructor in their theological academy.

Professor Stuart appears to be well acquainted with the writings of German Neologians, and he has not read them in vain. From him we have abundance of Neology at second hand. And is there no danger of its spreading in this country? Many suppose that fears about Neology are visionary, and that whatever influence that baneful system might have had hitherto, it is happily now entirely without effect. The grossness of the system is, it may be admitted, too monstrous to be received. But while the system itself is reprobated, the spirit of it may nevertheless insinuate itself into the minds of many who have a respect for the names of those who have embraced it. It is a spirit in direct opposition to the gospel, subversive of the truth and authority of Divine revelation.

Influence among religious bodies is a talent of immense im-

portance, and one of the most serious responsibility. It is a great privilege to be fellow-helpers with the truth by contributing to bring before the public every work that is suited to illustrate the word of God. But how sinful must it be when this influence is employed in circulating what is calculated to lower or overthrow its fundamental doctrines!

The recommendation of Professor's Stuart's commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, cannot be excused, by the allegation that the errors are trivial, and that its patrons do not pledge themselves for its entire accuracy. The departures from the truth are so gross that they overturn the gospel. Whoever knows any thing of human nature, is aware that it is prone to receive the evil rather than the good, and that even Christians are liable to be perverted by the sleight of men. What a melancholy reflection would it be to a man of God, if this impious rejection of God's testimony as to the imputation of sin and righteousness, should spread among students and religious bodies in this country, in consequence of Professor Stuart's book having been recommended by names they have been accustomed to respect.

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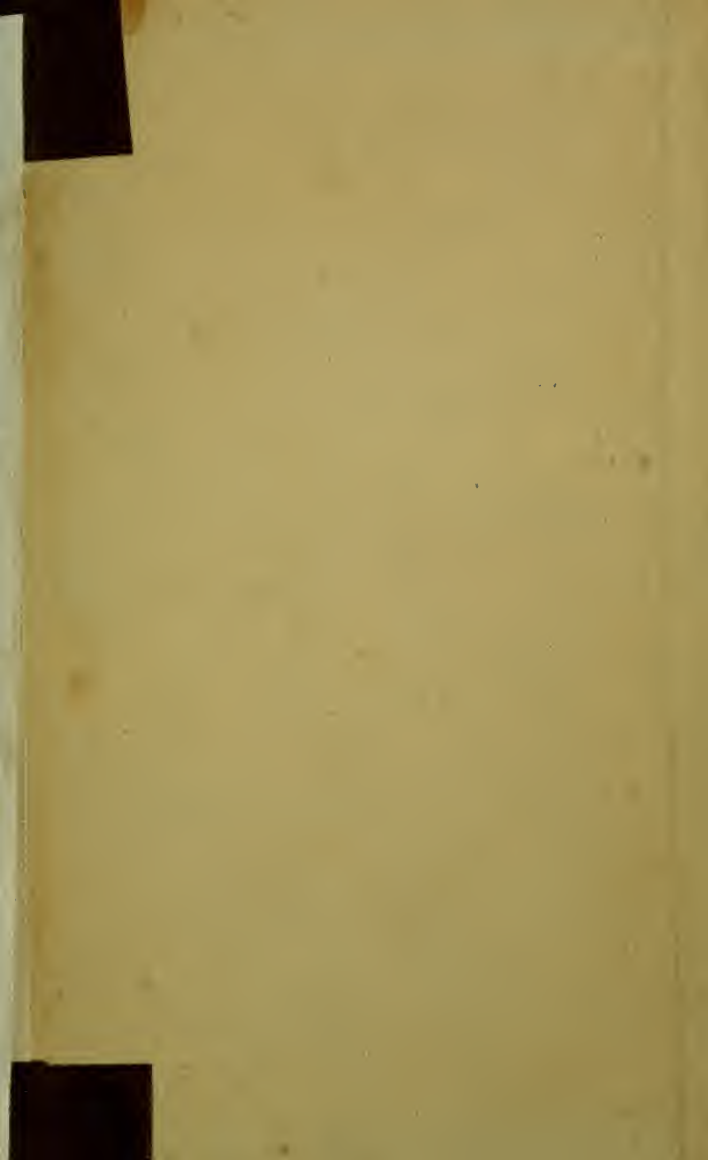
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